DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 448 824 JC 010 097

AUTHOR	Cassara, Shirley, Ed.; Bernard, Jean M., Ed.
TITLE	Teaching for Our Times: Focus on Learning, Volume Two.
INSTITUTION	Bunker Hill Community Coll., Boston, MA.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	124p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Bunker Hill Community College, Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, 250 New Rutherford Avenue, Boston, MA 02129-2925. Tel: 617-228-2435.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*College Faculty; Community Colleges; Discovery Learning; Higher Education; *Learning; Teachers; Teaching Experience; *Teaching (Occupation); Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Bunker Hill Community College MA

ABSTRACT

The articles in this book were written by faculty and staff at Bunker Hill Community College (MA), each author addressing the issue of learning by incorporating their experiences as educational leaders. In this second volume of Teaching for Our Times, the focus is on what makes and shapes learning. The 16 chapters cover topics such as learning from diversity, learning to serve, ways of learning, and transformation through learning. They illustrate the action research paradigm in which the results of learning come back to influence the style of delivery, thus completing the teaching-learning cycle. In an article entitled "Building Community in the Classroom," Sharyn Lowenstein shares five strategies to build a community spirit within the classroom. In another article, Vilma M. Tafawa argues that "to be successful in a multicultural language classroom, instructors of English must have an appreciation of the relationship between culture and language and the influence of the native language on second language acquisition." Other articles include: (1) "Bagels, Sushi, Fufu, and Flan: The Diversity Project and Recipes for Change" (Lloyd Sheldon Johnson); (2) "Everything I Know about Teaching Can Be Learned from a Bumper Sticker" (Kevin Finnigan); and (3) "Communicating across Cultures in the Operating Room" (Jayne MacPherson). (JA)

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TEACHING FOR OUR TIMES

Focus on Learning

BUNKER HILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Volume Two

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TEACHING FOR OUR TIMES

Focus on Learning

Edited by
Shirley Cassarà
Jean M. Bernard

BUNKER HILL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Learning for the Real World

Dedicated to Roger A. Richards, Ph.D.
– colleague, mentor, friend –
1930 – 2000

Editorial Advisory Board: Patricia H. Colella, Herbert I. Gross, Sharyn Lowenstein,
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Copy Editors: Patricia H. Colella, Elizabeth Sumorok
Publication Design: Caryn Hirsch
Production: Ruth J. Goodwin

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Focus on Learning

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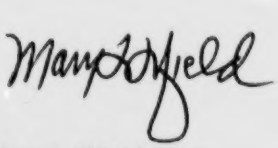
Forward

Last year, Bunker Hill Community College made a commitment to involve everyone in the teaching and learning process. One tangible outcome of that commitment was the publication of *Teaching For Our Times: A Journal of Good Teaching Practice,* published by our college and containing articles written by our faculty and staff. A less tangible sign of commitment, but equally as valuable, is the ongoing process of becoming a college community where learning takes center stage and where faculty, staff, and students become learners who contribute to each others' growth. With this commitment comes a responsibility. All sectors of the college must believe that learning never stops. In fact, it is what sustains our lives.

Learning has many facets and is not usually a linear endeavor; it requires that we constantly ask ourselves how we can become better teachers, counselors, support staff, and administrators. When answers are provided by our colleagues, students, and others, we must be open to listening to them. Because real learning inevitably results in change, it can be painful as well as joyful. It requires letting go of old familiar ways, opening ourselves to experimentation, and once again soliciting the opinions of others.

This second volume of *Teaching for Our Times* celebrates both the leadership taken by the faculty and the commitment of the college community to continue a journey of transformation. In these pages, you will read about the challenges, the excitement, and the sense of fulfillment achieved by those who have freed themselves to think as learners and shed the labels "teacher" or "student." For these educational leaders, the feedback loop of the teaching-learning paradigm is nearing completion and will provide pathways for others who wish to begin this adventure.



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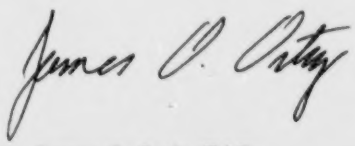
President



James O. Ortiz, Ed.D.
Vice President, Academic and Student Affairs

October, 2000

Introduction

Herbert I. Gross

In this, the second volume of **Teaching for Our Times**, *the focus is on what makes and shapes learning. As you read through the sections you will witness a procession of widely diverse reflections on the learning experience. From our point of view, this illustrates the part of the action research paradigm where the results of the learning come back to influence the style of delivery, thus completing the teaching-learning cycle. To begin this journey, our esteemed colleague and senior editorial advisory board member, Herb Gross, provides us with some signposts.*

Shirley Cassarà and Jean M. Bernard, Editors

I am meeting my class in developmental mathematics for the first time, and once again I am struck by the diversity that is present — not just the politically correct type of diversity that one often hears about, but rather real diversity. To begin with, the ages of the students range from seventeen to sixty-five, and in some of my classes the students have been even older. In fact, at age seventy-one, I still encounter students who are my senior. There are married students and single parents, many of whom carry a full load of classes and manage to work twenty or more hours a week to help support their families.

And, yes, there is also the politically correct diversity. In a class of twenty-five students, there are often half a dozen nationalities and at least as many different languages represented. Caucasians are sometimes the plurality but hardly ever the majority.

My mind drifts back to the early days of television and the critically acclaimed series, *Naked City*, which dealt in a very human way with crime in New York City. Each program ended with the voiced-over lines, "There are eight million stories like this in the naked city, and this has been one of them." Now, as I look at the class in front of me, I think to myself, "There are twenty-five unique stories in this classroom, and each student has one to tell."

However, in spite of all, there is an overwhelming commonality that permeates the classroom. Namely, all of the students in my developmental classes have been "battered" by mathematics in the past, and they are now hopeful that this will be their lucky time, the time when they will learn to

understand mathematics and get a jump start on their quest for improved upward mobility. They and I are united in a common and enormous task. It is no longer enough for me to be facile with mathematics, although this was certainly enough when, as a student, all I had to do was understand the material and communicate this knowledge to my instructors. It was still virtually enough when I taught at MIT, where students usually needed only to be told what to do and how to do it. However, it is different for my students. They need material that is relevant to their diverse backgrounds and experiences. How, then, do I find a commonality by which to approach each topic?

The challenge is a bit different but equally important when it comes to helping those students who are academically much stronger. Here we must come to grips with a very special question. If we consider all other things equal (whatever that means), why would a student who wants a four-year college degree take two packages over one? Why doesn't such a student begin initially by entering the college from which he or she plans to graduate? There are a multitude of correct answers — it might be a financial problem, an academic problem, a family problem, or one of a hundred other things. Whatever the reason, each of these students is a special minority of one, and it is our job not only to teach them well, but also in such innovative ways that when they eventually transfer, they will not have lost ground to those students who entered the university as freshmen.

Our challenge, then, is clear. We are, virtually de facto, assigned the task of being the national experts on the first two years of post-secondary education. We do not teach juniors and seniors. We do not teach graduate students. We are not required to publish scholarly research. However, to live up to our billing of being "different but equal" to the four-year college or university, we must look carefully at our unique student population and find ways of teaching them, using means that are relevant to their frame of reference. While we realize that teaching and learning are different sides of the same coin, we may say that the first issue of *Teaching for Our Times* was dedicated to looking at the problem from the teaching point of view. In that context, it was the teacher who served as the focal point. This issue is dedicated to looking at the problem from the learner's point of view. In this context, it is the student who is the focal point.

The one who teaches, learns.

Ethiopian proverb

LEARNING FROM DIVERSITY

Anne R. Umansky
Lloyd Sheldon Johnson
Sharyn Lowenstein
Vilma M. Tafawa

Moving from "I" to "Thou": Bridging the Barriers of Age and Culture at the Community College

Anne R. Umansky

America has long been a nation experiencing various levels of denial about the depth of racial bigotry and its history, scars, and legacy. We exaggerate some progress, ignore evidence of continued bigotry and inequality, and celebrate our diversity, more by eating tacos, pizza, bagels, and Chinese food than through interpersonal relations.

Lenny Zakim, 1997

For community college students, many of whom must work, have family obligations, and who live and work in environments ghettoized by poverty, race, ethnicity, and even age, the college campus may be the one arena where a student body as diverse as ours has an opportunity to mingle freely with "the other." How else can students gain a more personal sense of the reality of someone who does not look, or sound, or think like them? Is this not one of the objectives of an education "for the real world"? Bunker Hill Community College, with its rich mosaic of students, has made enormous progress in providing all of our students with opportunities to learn from and about each other; and yet, we can do more.

Getting to Know Someone from an Earlier Time

I was first struck by the insulation, the "here and now" world view held by many of my writing students some ten or fifteen years ago. Their own little corner of the world, their own tight circle of friends was their reality. Few of them had contact, let alone friendships, with someone of another race, culture, or even age. At that time, I was becoming sensitive to the stereotyping of people of "a certain age," since I was reaching that "certain age." This "born yesterday" generation had seemingly little sense of history, of a time other than its own. Listening to their classroom discussions and reading their papers, I saw few of them evincing any real curiosity, not only

about the past but about the personal history of their own parents. Students all uniformly seemed to love and revere their grandmothers, but except for responding to their grandmothers' non-judgmental nurturing, they knew little about Grandma's life before she became Grandma.

At that time, I was teaching College Writing I, which requires the writing of essays based on various rhetorical modes. I decided that one of the required essays should be based on an in-depth interview of someone over sixty. For those without a grandmother, this presented an obstacle. Many did not know anyone over sixty, or even over fifty! Ours has become a very impermeable, age-layered society. The "over sixty" requirement had to become negotiable.

I developed a questionnaire (see Assignment A, p. 22) from which the students could choose or amplify questions to act as a springboard for a meaningful conversation. I cautioned the students that this was to be a "conversation," not a clipped question and answer exchange, and that it required a minimum of two hours. This was not to be conducted on the telephone, but face to face. The questions included both personal and social history, focusing on the youth and early adulthood of the interviewee. They ranged from mundane questions about the bathroom, the number of sinks in the house, ice boxes and refrigerators, party-line telephones, schooling, teachers, children's games, and how teens socialized to weightier questions about early working conditions, unions, strikes, the Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Works Progress Administration, World War II, being drafted, being sent overseas during wartime, blackouts, presidents, family stories or traditions, family arguments, experiencing prejudice, and how the elders viewed the younger generation. The students were advised to seek concrete answers, but if they sensed they were beginning to tread on sensitive, personal areas, not to probe further.

The results, both written and personal, were impressive. Many of the conversations arched back to times and experiences the students had not even read about in history texts. Darrin interviewed Ghazi, an Armenian co-worker who grew up in Davenport, Iowa amongst blond, blue-eyed children of German descent. Ghazi's parents had fled Armenia "because the Turks from a neighbouring country had invaded their villages and were killing everyone."

Judith interviewed Mario, her father-in-law, whose Depression experiences left him with "an insecurity that he has carried with him all his life," a time when "the talk at home always revolved around money" and "idle, bitter men were locked in grave discussions of economic survival." Mario "still worries whether his savings will last him for the years he has left."

Lauren's mother, brought up in Somerville, remembered the fear of air raids during World War II. "A loud siren would go off and blankets had to be put over the windows to blacken the house. No lights were allowed. Air raid wardens were assigned to areas to make sure the rules were being followed." Some students learned, for the first time, about wartime rationing, when even those with money needed a coupon to buy most food and shoes.

An Italian-American student finally learned why his uncle had only three fingers on his right hand. When World War II ended in one southern Italian village, some young farm hands were assigned to clear the war's debris from the fields in order to make them ready for planting. His uncle picked up a live German grenade and suddenly became a three-fingered man.

Rhoda learned how her grandmother was able to get out of Germany shortly after *Kristalnacht*, "the night the soldiers smashed windows, houses, stores and synagogues of Jews...and began taking all Jewish men ages fourteen and older to the concentration camps." Later, on board a ship bound for England, her grandmother heard "the news that Hitler had invaded Poland."

In all these conversations, personal history had coalesced with national and world history. Students were learning that history is not an abstraction. The stereotypical old ladies, the watery-eyed old men were gone, and human beings leaped from the pages. One sweet grandma divorced Gramp when he "literally gambled the business away." When her second husband would "lock Gram in a room with mothballs because she was allergic to them," she still stayed with him because he was "a good provider."

Although another old grandmother was addicted to making "hateful racist" comments, and went "out of her way to wear orange clothing on St. Patrick's Day," the writer came to understand her grandmother's "misguided anger as the only channel of release for... a cold and lonely life." Another student with a spitfire grandmother concluded: "I attribute her sharp tongue to having spent twenty years as a waitress, ninety years in Jersey City, and sixty years as a mother." One student came to finally have some understanding of her rigid, matriarchal Chinese mother-in-law who, as a teenager during the Japanese occupation, "would make her face dirty to prevent the Japanese soldiers from taking her prisoner."

One student described shaking "the leather-like hand with the piney spike hairs growing out of them" belonging to an old Irishman. In his description, the student could also see "the well-built, handsome, smiling man" the Irishman had been.

Mr. Bowen, a 64-year-old neighbor who grew up in Idaho, described being taken to see *Gone with the Wind* when it first appeared in movie theaters. That film became a line of demarcation in his life. "There was a 'before' and now he would live with the 'after'." Rather than being attracted to Scarlet O'Hara, as his father was, Mr. Bowen's sympathies lay with Rhett Butler. At the age of fourteen, he realized he was different. He returned that evening with a sick feeling in his stomach, and already a longing for "the little boy who died at a movie palace in Boise."

One ancient spent his Sundays at the telephone lines "writing bets of all kinds (straights, teasers, parlays)...football action is a major source of income, and depending on the day's results, it provides him with an alternative life style of being temporarily wealthy or perilously close to not being able to pay the phone bill — which is the equivalent of Beethoven *sans* piano."

Finally, one student named Clarice, already in her 60's, did not need to search for a suitable subject. She chose to interview a member of her Baptist congregation, a gentleman with whom she had had only a nodding acquaintance. When I ran into her in the supermarket a year later, she thanked me for the assignment. The man she had interviewed was now her "steady."

Writing about someone the students knew and for whom they had some feeling produced some vivid images. One grandfather "used to walk around the house in his old, ratty robe and eat stale Fig Newtons. I remember he used to just sit on the front porch, eat and smoke Pall Mall filterless cigarettes. He just seemed to get older and older out there." Another student discovered "men returning from work covered with the dust of red bricks which they had fashioned into some useful structure." Antonia described her great-aunt among "rocks and boulders in a clear mountain stream in Italy which were the scrubbing boards for doing the laundry."

Getting to Know Someone from a Different Place

These positive results lead to my second epiphany, one more directly related to the students at BHCC. By the mid-1980s, our student population had, due in part to our very fine English as a Second Language program, become considerably enriched by students of different colors, races, religions and languages. Yet, despite the tremendous and unique opportunity for human interchange available on our campus, in our student lounges and

meeting rooms, students still seemed to be clustered in pods, clinging to their "own kind." For some foreign students, BHCC may have been the only place where they could practice their new language with native speakers in a natural setting; however the safety of the pod prevented them from doing so. To me, it seemed like such a loss of opportunity.

I suggested to two members of the ESL Department, Michelle Schweitzer and Jessica Bethony, that we combine my English classes with their ESL classes for at least two sessions so that the students could interview each other and then use the interviews as the basis for writing profiles about each other. I developed a questionnaire (see Assignment B, p. 22) for the students in my English classes to interview someone from another culture; meanwhile, Michelle and Jessica developed similar questionnaires (see Assignment C, p. 23) for their ESL students. The questions revolved around work, working conditions, study, entertainment, sports, family structure, students' reasons for leaving their native countries, and their reactions to being thrust into a new and strange environment.

For many of my American-born students in those years, this was the first time they had conducted a personal conversation of some depth with a foreign student. The ESL students looked forward to the experience with enthusiasm; here was a chance to really exchange more than two sentences with an "American." There was some resistance from several of my "native" students, both white and African-American, an undercurrent of resentment toward immigrants who were getting "preferential treatment." However, when they all got together, after some initial shyness, the mood and the tempo became electric. For many of my students, the experience was image-altering.

When I brought my writing group into the ESL classroom, many of the smiling ESL students stood up. I had the sensation we were being cheered, applauded. We three instructors tried to match each student to a suitable partner. Some of my students later wrote of their apprehensions: "I am usually uncomfortable in situations where new characters are introduced, and especially so when it is someone with whom I might feel guilty about being a wealthy American — one of the world's elite. As Duong approached me, I could feel the tension begin to surface and my defense mechanisms go up." Another wrote, "I am ashamed to admit to the preconceptions and prejudices with which I came to this interview."

In only two hours of conversation, horizons were broadened, sympathies deepened. Many students commented that they were lucky to be Americans. "My childhood memories are of baseball, schoolyards, and summers at the beach. His childhood memories are of fighting, bombings, and summers in fear." One student who interviewed a 70-year-old Russian-Jewish man whose entire family had been buried alive wrote: "I don't have an experience of war; I've only heard about it."

Another student was suddenly aware of his own provincialism: "What really shocked me is that he (a Lebanese Muslim) knows more about American foreign policy than I do, which reflects poorly on my citizenship as an American." Another experienced the revelation that "the planets don't revolve around the United States!"

Many students became aware of differences in lifestyle as their interview partners described working conditions in Russia, in Haiti, in Vietnam. They also exchanged information about wages, levels of unemployment, street cleaning, the subway system, the restrictions on teenage dating in some cultures, the family shame when an unmarried child moves into his own apartment, and, of course, the inevitable comparison of salaries and living expenses. Sarah, a parking enforcement officer who earned $900 a month, interviewed Mr. Chu, who had worked on a rice farm in China where he earned the equivalent of $50 a week for forty-eight hours of work. The disparity shocked her until she learned that his rent was $10 a month and utilities $20. When Sarah told Mr. Chu that her rent was $400 and her utilities $100, "he was no longer impressed with my salary."

A number of my students came away with a new appreciation for their own freedom from governmental interference in choosing where to live, where to work, which hospital to go to, where and when to travel, and what to say. Americans "just have to buy a plane ticket, have a passport, and they're off." Some heard, for the first time, stories of perilous illegal journeys on boats that were hardly seaworthy. Most came away with a deepened understanding of the magnitude of what these immigrants had lost — their families, their professions, their very adulthood. A Chinese ESL student with a degree in economics was now learning English "from ABC, like a kid."

Nevertheless, some of my students found areas of disagreement. One was taken aback by the ESL student's outrage at the book, *Satanic Verses*, by Salman Rushdie: "I am not about to condemn anyone to death because of

what they write." Another was "amazed at what we had in common, but I was sad to see all that we would never agree on. Yet, for better or worse, I met a new person."

Closing the Gap — an Ongoing Conversation

These insights about the "old," the past, and the "other" were gained from one-on-one human contact. They are the residue of real conversations between human beings.

Eating *pad thai* at the cultural food fest, listening to ethnic music, watching the dancers on the platform — these are also important, and they are fun — but for developing understanding, empathy, and sometimes even friendship, they are the equivalent of sound bytes. Such activities are still essentially theater with the inevitable separation between of performer and audience. They may celebrate the culture, but we must take the leap toward celebrating the individual. "Talk is cheap" takes on a positive connotation when "talk" becomes real conversation.

What next? Bunker Hill Community College could inaugurate its own landmark oral history project, an ongoing conversation over the years, covering all our students, perhaps even all our faculty and staff. The unique feature of such a project is that it would be a two-way process wherein each interviewer is also an interviewee. In addition to getting us from "I" to "Thou," such a project conducted by an urban community college could provide some valuable material for research into how human attitudes in densely diversified college settings can change.

And finally, my professional triumph. My student Mike, after concluding the interviews with Nina, a Russian émigré, invited her to continue the conversation at a local restaurant for dinner:

> *We talked or, I guess, I talked more and found that we had much in common. This Russian girl was really cool! We went back to my place and started talking about her present day living situation. It seems she lived with two junkies who took all their frustrations and problems out on her. We drove to her apartment and picked up her belongings. She's been living with me ever since. Thank you, Professor Umansky.*

ASSIGNMENT A

"I" and "Thou": Getting to Know Someone from an Earlier Time

When you have completed this module, you will have:

- become familiar with some key interviewing techniques,
- effectively used these techniques,
- used the information and insights garnered during the interview to form a thesis and write a profile (approximately 750 words) of an "older" friend,
- shared an interesting experience with an older person and had a good time.

An interview is not necessarily a formal event, but covers any situation where the reporter talks with someone face to face to obtain information. An interview can range from a conversation with a local official about a meeting to a formal questioning of the President of the United States. The interview you are about to conduct is more intimate and, for you, more significant. You are being permitted into the life of another human being, and in learning about that other person, you may be learning something about yourself.

Step 1: The Interview

Have a long conversation of at least two hours (more than one conversation would be even better) with someone who is at least sixty years old. This person may be a parent, a grandparent, a relative, a friend of the family, a neighbor. It is important that you take some notes during or after each conversation, not only to help you remember, but also to record some direct quotes which you can include in your paper. Some students have tape recorded these interviews so that they can keep the voice as well as the thoughts of the interviewee. Do not, however, use a tape recorder or take notes in the presence of your subject unless you have first asked permission.

Allow your conversation(s) to be leisurely. Allowing a lot of time for the conversation achieves rapport because it shows your respect for your subject. Observe facial reactions and body language. Some of your questions will lead you along interesting paths, toward a real exchange of personal history, memories, attitudes, and even a good deal of social history. Of course, the questions must be tailored to the person you are interviewing.

You may have already developed some questions of your own, but here are a few additional questions which may open up a meaningful conversation:

- What is it like to find yourself at the age of sixty (or seventy, or eighty)?
- Describe your birthplace. Why did you leave?
- What were your expectations upon coming from another country (or another city or neighborhood) to the United States (or to Boston)?
- Were these expectations fulfilled?
- Describe your childhood. Your neighborhood. What games did children play?
- Describe your school. Do you remember any teachers?
- What did you dream of becoming when you were young? What did you ultimately do?
- Did you go to college? To work? Describe your early working conditions. Your salary and benefits? Did you belong to a union? Did you ever go out on strike?
- What do you remember of the Depression? The CCC? The WPA?
- What did you do for relaxation or entertainment when you were in your teens and early twenties?
- Do you still have friends from those years?
- Describe the kitchen in your house. The bathroom. Did you have a refrigerator or an ice-box? An individual telephone or a party line?
- Tell me about your parents. What were they like? What did they do for a living? Did you have disagreements with them? About what?
- What do you remember of World War II (or the Korean War)? Were you drafted?
- Who was your favorite president? Why?
- Do you think life is better (or worse) now than when you were in your twenties? Why? In what way?
- What do you think of your children? Did they turn out the way you had envisioned?
- What do you think of the younger generation today?
- What is the most important change that has come about in your lifetime?
- What family stories or traditions are important to you?
- Have you ever experienced any form of prejudice?
- What are your regrets? Your blessings?

Step 2: Writing the Profile

After you have completed your conversations, you will have to draw some conclusions from the many concrete details that you have gathered about your friend's life and attitudes. Then you will have to develop a thesis. Is there some theme, characteristic, outlook or situation which has shaped this person's life?

Although this profile is based on an oral interview, it is not to be written as a series of questions and answers. You, as the writer, must evaluate the material, decide what is significant, and control the shape of the written profile. By all means, include direct quotes, but treat this as a unified, coherent and fully developed profile of a "friend." The profile should contain between five to seven paragraphs. Submit the draft for checking before writing the final version.

Finally, please note that this assignment is entitled "I and Thou." This phrase, coined by the philosopher Martin Buber, is "I" and "thou," not "I" and "it." An "it" is a thing, but a "thou" is a person. This gloriously simple phrase, then, implies that "I" and "thou" respect each other's equality, dignity, mystery and humanness.

Good luck, and enjoy this adventure in communication!

ASSIGNMENT B

"I" and "Thou": Getting to Know Someone from Another Culture

When you have completed this module, you will have had several conversations with a BHCC student from another culture, a student whose native language is different from your own. Based on these conversations, you will write a profile comparing and contrasting the life of your new friend with your own.

The following questions may help you get started.

- How long have you been in the United States?
- What part of the world are you from? City? Rural area?
  How was your city or town different from where you now live?
- What are you studying at BHCC? What do you hope to do or be ten years from now?
- Besides going to BHCC, do you work? What do you do? Do you like it?

- What did you do in your own country? Work? Go to school?
  (If "work": What did you work at? Did it require any training?
  How much did you earn? How many hours a week did you work?
  How old were you when you started? Did you enjoy your work?
  What were your working conditions?)
  (If "school": What did you study? How large was your school?
  How was the education different from that in the United States?
  Did you plan to go to college?)
- Why did you leave your country? Was it hard to leave? Did you leave family behind? How do you feel about that? Do you have any hopes of seeing them again?
- Tell me about your way of life in your country. What did you do for entertainment? Sports? How different were these activities from American leisure-time activities?
- Describe your new living style in the United States. Do you live alone or with your family or friends? Do you eat the same food or has your diet changed?
- What language do you speak at home or with your friends?
  Do you speak English with any of your friends?
- Have you made friends with any Americans? How do Americans differ from your countrymen and women? Do they behave differently? Think differently?
- What do you like about living in the United States? What do you dislike?

If you have any interesting questions of your own, do add them to this list. And remember, you will be asked questions, too.

Good luck, and have an interesting conversation!

ASSIGNMENT C

"I" and "Thou": Getting to Know an American

One way to learn about American culture is to conduct interviews with American people in which you include questions on controversial topics. The answers you get will not only give you a view of this society's values, but they will also tell you something about your own values. The following questions are only suggestions. Be sure to add your own interesting questions.

- What is your name? How do you spell it?
- What city are you from? Where are your grandparents from? Where are your great-grandparents from?
- How many people are there in your family? Are you married? Do you have children?
- Are you working now? Where? Do you like your job? Why or why not?
- What do you enjoy doing in your free time? What are your hobbies?
- Do you like Bunker Hill Community College? What courses are you taking now? What is your major? What will you do when you finish BHCC?
- What kind of music do you like?
- What kind of books do you like to read?
- What kind of sports do you like?
- What kind of food do you like? Do you ever eat food from other countries? What kind?
- How much TV do you watch? What are your favorite programs?
- Do you have any foreign friends? Do you think Americans like foreigners? Why or why not? Do you speak other languages? Which ones?
- Have you ever traveled to another countries? Which ones?
- If you won the lottery and you could take a trip anywhere, where would you go? Why?
- When you were a child, were your parents very strict? Did they give you a lot of rules to follow? Do you think this is good?
- What do you hope to be ten years from now?
- What do you know about my native country?
- In your opinion, what are some of the problems facing America today?
- How can we solve these problems?

Have an enjoyable conversation!

Bagels, Sushi, Fufu, and Flan: The Diversity Project and Recipes for Change

Lloyd Sheldon Johnson

The student population at Bunker Hill Community College is a rich mosaic of diversity. We are multicolored, multicultural, multilingual, and multifaceted. Forty percent of our student population represents over sixty countries. This is truly an institution that should be raised as a model for what community colleges throughout America will look like in most urban arenas within the next decade. Along with the complexities and challenges of teaching to a population that is dynamic and ever-evolving, we must push forward, despite intolerance and indifference.

BHCC has moved forward with some powerful initiatives that will enhance the curriculum, integrate new technologies into all modes of learning, and provide support services that will empower students to be more successful. These initiatives have created a new vision and commitment for the institution that will accelerate the achievement of its goals and plans. As one of these, the diversity initiative is a part of the college's critical agenda.

Our country is changing, and it is changing rapidly. The demographics are enlightening and, in some cases, rather alarming. Washington, D.C. boasts some fifty Ethiopian and Eritrean restaurants. San Diego has surpassed the Detroit area as the hub for Arab Americans. Houston has attracted a large Nigerian population. The Miami area is home to "Little Cuba." Italian is the primary language spoken in the neighborhoods of Boston's North End. Watertown, a suburb of Boston, still has the largest Armenian population in America. Many Haitians have made their homes in either Florida or the Boston area. New York has one of the largest Caribbean festivals in North America, and California is home to many of the diverse populations of Asia and the Pacific islands.

Our country is in the midst of a most powerful change. As we adjust to these times and open our arms to embrace the diversity that truly symbolizes

America, we must prepare ourselves for the changes that lie ahead. It is important that we learn how to acknowledge and accept difference. The term "tolerance" was bandied about for many years in most of the early literature that addressed issues of racism and discrimination. More recently, it has been frowned upon because it suggests that someone must be "put up with" or swallowed like the bitter taste of some awful medicine. The current vernacular seeks to be more inclusive as it addresses diversity. We must be mindful of the fact that difference does not imply "more than" or "less than." We must also acknowledge that true diversity allows for the inclusion of varying opinions, different lifestyles, different modes of dress and appearance, and many other modes of expression that may not comply with some imposed standard or norm.

The Diversity Project at Bunker Hill Community College[1] is a work in progress which has evolved as a result of the current president's commitment to a college-wide strategic planning initiative that began by prioritizing the concerns of the institution. Initially, a series of workshops and planning sessions were held to receive input from all the members of our community. One of the resulting priorities pointed clearly to the need for programs and projects that would foster open and honest communication. Though we had the usual channels of communication available at most college campuses, it was felt that more were needed. Members of our college community now have the opportunity to provide input at the Board of Trustees' meetings, the president's open forums, college committee meetings, as well as at the monthly college forum. As these channels increased in number and availability, people started speaking up.

The Diversity Task Force[2], comprised of representatives from the administration, faculty, and staff, held some brainstorming sessions and decided to take a critical look at the climate of the college relative to diversity. The group designed an assessment instrument and set out to survey the college community to identify areas of strength and weakness, keeping in mind that its findings would be most valuable in designing projects that address the diversity initiative. All of the findings of this climate survey have been documented and distributed to the college community.

There were a few areas that drew interest and pointed to the need for more study. For example, discrimination based on race and job status was an important finding. Many employees of the college felt they were not included in the social and intellectual culture of the college because of their job status. All of the African Americans surveyed felt they had been discriminated against within the past year. Gender, sexual orientation, age and religion were eliminated as sources of discrimination. An ambitious endeavor, the climate survey gave rise to the need for critical assessments in other key areas. Surveys such as these provide us with a window through which we can honestly view our institution and work together to improve the climate we all share. The next step will be to design instruments to poll our students on the same key issues that we addressed when looking at the administration, faculty and staff of the college.

Bunker Hill Community College has inherited a legacy that began some twenty-five years ago when armed policemen were stationed on site to escort students of color into the building because many "local" residents did not

want "them" to attend "their" college. This was, of course, during the time when the busing issue was an ongoing political and social fireball that rocked the halls of justice and kept people and neighborhoods divided. During those times, rumors spread like fire on seasoned wood, and most people wore the armor of fear and rage. The fires have died down; there is no longer a need for a police presence on campus, and Bunker Hill Community College has opened its doors to all.

The Diversity Project seeks to bring a new energy to the discussion on diversity and inclusion by providing "learning adventures" that guide the participant toward a powerful and inescapable self-awareness. Once the experiential component has been completed, participants are generally eager to share their new learning.

The program uses experiential learning encounters to totally engage participants as they move from the stage of commitment to civility to the expectation of diversity and inclusion. Each encounter promotes risk, self-awareness and change.

Participants in any awareness encounter bring with them the beliefs, attitudes and values that they have developed and nurtured over the years. The opinions that have guided them and provided them with comfort and shelter for years will not necessarily be challenged in a single encounter. That is why it is important to give participants multiple opportunities to share their views and to listen to those of others.

Each adventure has as its foundation an activity with an objective, a process, and an outcome. Inherent in the model is a strong leadership component designed to groom each participant as a leader, thus ensuring that the program will perpetuate itself. This process can be started at any time, suspended for brief periods, and tailored to fit the needs of any institution or organization.

The training component is outlined below along with two sample "adventures" that can be used to sensitize an audience to the issues of race and to the challenges of those with sensory and physical challenges.

The Training Component

The activities which make up the training component were designed to inspire dialogue and discussion around key social issues that impact the diversity of our college community. They explore culture, gender, age, skin color, physical appearance and other external features that often force

people to isolate themselves or their groups. One of the primary goals of this project is to get people to open up to each other so that the myths and stereotypes that shape many behaviors can be discussed in a safe, nonjudgmental environment. From these discussions, many other discussions will develop, and out of these will likely come the development of programs and activities that bring more harmony to our college community.

Ground Rules

Before beginning the activities, it is important to have each participant agree to the ground rules. These rules help to frame the discussions by setting limits and parameters. Participants must agree to:

- respect the opinions of others,
- speak only for themselves and not for anyone else in the group,
- address the group when speaking and not target individuals within the group,
- speak openly and honestly,
- leave their egos at the door and not carry issues outside of the group once the adventures and discussions are completed.

It is advisable to distribute the ground rules to each participant and to write them on a board or newsprint where they can be visible throughout the meeting.

Discussion

The person who has convened the group should lead the discussion after completing each activity. It is important to note that one activity can take an hour or longer if the discussions are allowed to flow. It is helpful to limit the time each person speaks so that anyone who wishes to participate has an opportunity to do so. The idea is to allow the process to flow. It may sometimes be necessary for the leader to remind participants of the ground rules so that the process is not impeded by those who wish to dominate. The leader should keep in mind that he or she is dealing with a captive audience. People volunteer to participate and they agree to the ground rules. By doing this, they tacitly commit to being open to change. This is a powerful beginning to a seamless process that can evolve into empowering individuals in the college and the college as a whole. If all participants feel that their voices will be heard, they will speak out.

Closure

It is advisable to attempt only one activity per meeting. To engage any more than this will put participants on overload and dilute the power of the discussions. At the end of the session, which should last at least an hour but not more than three, the session should reach closure. The leader should provide a summation and acknowledge the group for its commitment. One of the most powerful closure activities that brings cohesion to any group involves creating a human circle with participants standing and expressing, in a minute or less, what they got out of the activity. It allows participants to engage in their own personal closure while giving a part of what they feel to the group. The leader should thank everyone, discuss times for the next meeting, and invite written suggestions for activities or policies for the institution.

A Model for Change

The Diversity Project has provided our college community with an opportunity to openly and safely talk about our perceptions, our differences, and our realities. We have used our new learning to inspire colleagues, friends and family members. We have free and open discussions and feel we have the support of the college as we move forward with this initiative. There is now a dean of diversity and inclusion, whose position was created through the president's office and is structured as a critical component of the college's executive team. All of these efforts have contributed toward making this institution a model for social change and a powerful example of the joy that can be experienced once individuals and organizations make a commitment not only to acknowledge difference, but also to accept and applaud it.

RECIPES FOR CHANGE: Sample Activities from The Diversity Project

Adventure One: White, Black, Yellow, Brown

Objective: *to open dialogue and create a safe environment for honest communication to take place.*

Process

Participants will need paper and pens. No names need to be added to the sheets that will be passed in and shared for discussion. Each participant receives a sheet with either "white," "brown," "black" or "yellow" written at the

top. They are then to write, until exhausted, about how that group is treated in America. The assignment is loose enough to allow for many perceptions and variations.

Outcome

Participants will feel uncomfortable. A strong leader must guide the discussion and direct it toward the goal of understanding others.

Adventure Two: Without Senses — i feel; therefore, I am.

Objective: *to help participants become sensitive to those with physical and sensory challenges.*

Process

Each group is limited to six participants. Wheelchairs, ear plugs, blindfolds, crutches, and masking tape or duct tape are provided to create "challenges" for the participants. Group problems are assigned and everyone must participate to find solutions. A math story problem is given, as well as a task that involves the entire group going together to some other part of the building to retrieve something. Finally, there is a problem that involves reading and interpreting a short story.

Outcome

Responses will be varied since some participants are blindfolded, others are wearing earplugs, and others are in wheelchairs. Participants will be able to discuss the difficulties of constantly adjusting to the environment around them.

Endnotes

[1] The Diversity Project was designed by Professor Lloyd Sheldon Johnson and supported with funding from the BHCC Minigrant Program for faculty projects and research.

[2] The Diversity Task Force, supported and encouraged by Dr. Mary Fifield, President of Bunker Hill Community College, was comprised of Debbie Blouin, Eileen Berger, Charles Chisholm, Tusi Gastonguay, Lloyd Sheldon Johnson, Juanita Lightfoot, Lorraine Murphy, Rekha Palriwala, John Reeves, Karl Smith, and Yvette Straughter.

Building Community in the Classroom

Sharyn Lowenstein

Connection, risk-taking, hearing all the voices of my students, understanding others' assumptions, crossing difficult-to-navigate cultural divides, encouraging the shy student to speak out, inviting the student with learning disabilities to fully participate, urging the student acquiring a second (or third or fourth) language to join in — this is my vision for interaction in the classroom.

This vision clashes with certain realities. We work in a commuter school in which our students are juggling multiple, complex responsibilities. Many students barely have time to attend class, let alone get to know their classmates and the richly diverse community of learners at Bunker Hill Community College. While they may want to get involved in the life of the college and interact with others in the classroom, they are constantly straining against the exigencies of time. The catch is that without feeling a part of this community, without having the benefit of feedback from others, students may feel isolated, learn less, and be less likely to persist.

Many "community of learners" models have been developed, such as co-enrollment of a student cohort in two or more courses during a semester. At the 2000 National Association for Developmental Education conference, for example, there were eight presentations entirely focused on some aspect of learning communities. These models often involve policy change, adjustment of space, reworking of scheduling, all of which tend to be more difficult to implement at a commuter campus. Nonetheless, there are many ways to increase communication among students and create a stronger community within a single course without involving changes in policy, space, or scheduling.

In this article I wish to share five strategies which I believe build a community spirit within the classroom. These techniques acknowledge the

diversity of student voices, facilitate class members' awareness of each other, and increase their interdependence by encouraging risk-taking, problem-solving, teamwork, and dynamic interaction.

Strategy One: Weaving the Class Together

Description: On the first day of class, I ask the entire group to stand up. I hand a colorful roll of crepe paper, the kind that is used for party streamers, to one of the class members. I explain that when students are given the streamer, they will say their names and anything else they wish to share. After each person introduces herself while holding onto the streamer, she, in turn, hands over the roll to another class member. The goal is to make sure that each person holds onto some part of the roll without letting go for the duration of the exercise. Inevitably, we run out of streamer space, and the group must figure out how to find enough room for everyone. Inevitably, each student does secure a place on the streamer. At this point I ask the class to identify the one person missing from the configuration. It often takes a few moments for students to realize it is the teacher, who is then handed the roll and introduces herself. The teacher may want to ask the group to reflect on the reasons why this exercise was chosen.

Time Needed: 15-30 minutes, depending on which variation is implemented.

Ease of Logistics: Very simple to use; just a crepe paper roll is needed.

Assessment Areas

- *Attitude* — students' willingness or reluctance to participate
- *Information* — educational background or other details (depending on how I ask students to introduce themselves)
- *Skills* — group problem-solving skills and facility in thinking "out of the box"

Outcomes

- Students learn that members of the group are all connected, including the teacher.
- Students learn that there is no "back row"; that in order to be a member of the class, they will be expected to participate.
- Students learn that everyone in the group is important.
- Students engage in their first class problem-solving activity.
- Students are encouraged to take initiative.

Variations: This exercise can be done with string or any other connecting device. The faculty member can ask for more specific information, such as number of years at BHCC, other courses taken, career interests, course goals, and languages spoken.

Follow-up Activities

- administration of writing sample in which students are asked to elaborate upon their introductions
- distribution of students' contact information (telephone numbers, e-mail addresses)
- distribution of faculty office hours
- distribution of course syllabus with explanation of the ways group participation and problem-solving are critical to the course

Strategy Two: Weekly Letter to the Teacher

Description: As part of their weekly assignments, students respond to one or more written questions in a letter to the teacher. The goal is to encourage more frequent, direct, and casual communication. If students prefer, they may communicate via e-mail. Because grammar and stylistic concerns are de-emphasized in this genre, greater risk-taking and freedom of expression are also promoted. The letter format, as in the journal, invites students to respond in a less conventional way, thus encouraging analogies and personal responses. Unlike the journal, the intended audience, the teacher, is very clear. This may help some students focus more fully on the questions posed without worrying about who else will read their writing. Students report that the letters allow them to tell me about the challenges they face in completing the assignments. I, in turn, feel freer to provide more personalized comments on these letters or in my electronic replies.

The letter prompts I pose are enormously wide ranging. For example, students can be asked to interpret readings, react to tests or quizzes, analyze their progress, identify their untapped resources, and find applications in their lives for the course material. To encourage thoughtful, in-depth responses, I set a minimum length, generally 250 words. In addition, I have noticed that even a few of my comments will motivate students to write longer letters.

Time Needed: Depending on the questions asked, students may spend 15-60 minutes or more.

Ease of Logistics: Moderately easy. For best results, a question should be written and distributed to all so that students can refer to it when they write their letters.

Assessment Areas

- *Attitude* — students' persistence, patience, ideas about their relationship with the instructor
- *Information* — students' understanding of particular readings or other assignments
- *Skills* — students' ability to get ideas on paper, ask for help, generate ideas

Likely Outcomes

- The teacher better understands the needs of individual students as well as the class as a whole.
- The teacher is better able to plan subsequent classes.
- Students self-assess more frequently.
- Students who have language interferences (selected learning disabilities or second language challenges) may feel freer to communicate in this less formal format.
- The distance between teacher and student is decreased.

Variations

- Students choose from among several questions.
- Students write letters without any question prompts.
- A rotating committee of students writes the weekly questions.
- The teacher also writes a letter, which is distributed to the entire class.

Strategy Three: Talking Stick Adaptation[1]

Description: The talking stick is a Native American practice in which one person, while holding the stick, speaks her mind while the rest of the group listen with their hearts. In my adaptation, instead of a talking stick, we use a Kush ball, which is a subtle reminder of the crepe paper roll we worked with earlier. Although virtually any object can be used, I chose the Kush ball because it is squishy and lightweight, feels good to hold, and can be adapted for other exercises (see variations below). I open this activity by saying that as a teacher and member of the class, I need to understand

students' experiences of the assignments, the readings, their papers, and other activities.

Sometimes, I ask a very specific question, and sometimes I frame an open-ended query, such as: "What challenges are you now facing in completing this course?" We form a circle so that no one is facing someone else's back, and each student can be easily seen and heard. While someone speaks, no one else can talk or otherwise interrupt the group. When one person is finished talking, she passes the Kush ball to someone else. Once the activity is introduced, the teacher only speaks when the Kush ball is passed to her.

Time Needed: Depending on the nature of the prompt question and on the size of the class, this activity may take from 15 to 45 minutes. If the teacher goes first, the way in which she frames her response may also influence the length of others' responses.

Ease of Logistics: *Easiest.* All that is needed is a concrete symbol that will be meaningful to the class; chairs may need to be moved to form a circle.

Assessment Areas

- *Attitude* — students' feelings about the course material, homework, juggling their responsibilities, time management
- *Skills* — More than the other four strategies, this one requires the most focused listening skills.

Likely Outcomes

- Each student realizes she is not alone and that others are also experiencing challenges.
- Students begin to problem-solve.
- Students develop more understanding of others' needs and become more respectful and patient with one another.
- Every voice in the room is heard.
- Every student feels valued as an individual and as a part of the group.
- The teacher has useful information with which to plan future classes, respond to students, and structure assignments.
- The teacher may also express her concerns, thus reinforcing her membership as a real person in the group.
- Students are motivated to persist.

- By hearing the teacher's concerns and experience of the class, students understand their responsibility to communicate more clearly and stay on task.

Variations

- Students can sit in their original rows instead of a circle. If a Kush ball or some other soft object is used, it can be gently thrown between students. This adjustment adds a randomness to the order of the voices, and creates just enough tension that continual small surprises occur.
- The activity can occur at the end of a class session, so that it functions as a kind of summary of the class.

Follow-up Activity: Based on what students say, the instructor may decide to change the order of activities within the class session, reframe an assignment, or meet with students individually.

Strategy Four: Name That Class

Description: As an in-class activity, a classroom assessment technique, a letter to the faculty, or as a homework assignment, a contest can be staged to rename the course for the semester. I encourage students to think about the topics covered, the class organization, teacher-student interaction, and any other quality or occurrence that might be relevant. It is best to give students ample time to think about the class. I encourage students to write class names with explanations, which are then read aloud and written on the board. Students are asked to provide reasons for their suggestions. From the compiled list, I allow each student two choices, and then the class votes. The person whose new course title gets the most votes wins a prize. Handouts subsequent to this activity include the new class name.

Time Needed: The initial discussion explaining the activity should take no more than 10-15 minutes. If class time is taken to review the syllabus, then an additional 15 minutes might be needed. After students have completed the initial discussion, 15-20 minutes (depending on the class size) will be needed to write the choices on the board, discuss the rationale for the selections, vote, and possibly re-vote (in case of a tie).

Ease of Logistics: *Intermediate.* This is essentially a two-part activity which is best completed in consecutive classes. The activity requires a prize, which involves a preparatory step for the faculty member.

Assessment Areas

- *Attitude* — students' attitudes about the course material being covered, the homework, and their relationships with each other and the teacher
- *Knowledge* — students' general recall of the course material and understanding of the course goals

Likely Outcomes

- general review of topics covered in the course
- increased recognition of knowledge learned and skills acquired
- hearing the voices of all students in the class
- promotion of whole class discussion and teamwork, especially when the first variation below is utilized

Variations

- Each student works within a team, and it is the team which makes the suggestions and shares the prize.
- The activity can occur at the end of a class session so that it functions as a kind of summary of the class.

Strategy Five: Certificates of Appreciation

Description: Toward the end of the semester, I announce that the class will be making certificates as a way to acknowledge the contributions of class members. Together, we brainstorm the kinds of skills, attitudes and knowledge that should be recognized. To help remember students' contributions and reactions, we discuss the topics covered in the class and class interactions that have stood out.

Following this phase, I distribute individual pre-cut paper strips on which students write their names. Each student folds the paper and places it in a hat or other container, the more dramatic looking the better. Then the hat is circulated and each student draws a name. If a student draws her own name, she draws again. Everyone, including the instructor, participates. While I distribute plenty of supplies and encourage students to use their creative skills in making the certificates, I state that the purpose of this activity is not to produce a work of art or compete with each other, but rather to celebrate the progress of each class member. I encourage students to keep their recipients' names secret until the certificates are presented.

After the certificates are created, I ask for a volunteer to begin the first presentation. Each student reads her certificate aloud and physically presents it to the recipient. This activity is especially appropriate for one of those particularly stressful days, during mid-semester or end-of-the semester when students seem drained.

Time Needed: 15-20 minutes to create certificates and 15 minutes for presentations.

Ease of Logistics: *Moderately easy.* Necessary supplies include papers in different sizes, colors, and textures; varied writing and coloring implements and a hat or other container.

Assessment Areas

- students' observation of each others' behaviors
- students' abilities to give and receive positive feedback

Likely Outcomes

- Students feel recognized; every student has "air time" both to give and receive a certificate.
- Students are given the opportunity to review topics already covered in class.
- The class is energized.
- Some subtle aspects of learning are made concrete.
- Students are encouraged to learn more about each other.
- The pace of the class is altered.

Variation: If attendance is fairly consistent, names can be drawn a few weeks prior to the certificate-making to provide students time to observe and think about their peers as awardees.

Follow-up Activity: The energy generated by this activity lends a certain momentum for tackling more intellectually demanding, more tedious or more physically strenuous work. When implemented toward the end of the semester, it may also help students reflect on their learning experience as a pleasant, positive one.

Final Comments

The use of these techniques increases communication between and among group members, including the teacher. The class develops its own customs for and expectations of sharing information and reactions. The teacher is

seen as a real person, with her own preferences, challenges, and questions, thus becoming more accessible. These activities also generate the kind of feedback that brings surprises and allows the teacher to test her assumptions. In my experience, these kinds of activities promote group cohesion and teamwork as well.

Endnote

[1] I wish to thank Elisa Robyn, Chair of Liberal Studies, Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design, who demonstrated a version of the talking stick in her workshop "Creating Tribes: Using Tribal Elements in Curricular and Student Assessment" at the American Association for Higher Education's 1999 Conference on Assessment in Denver, Colorado. I acknowledge that this article's version of the talking stick, which might be perceived by some as inauthentically translated, is my responsibility alone. I wish to reiterate my respect for Native American traditions.

From Papua New Guinea to Boston: Embracing Cultural Diversity in a Learning Community

Vilma M. Tafawa

The inspiration for this article comes from a variety of sources, but the mention of two should suffice. First, I was most impressed by the scholarship of the first volume of *Teaching For Our Times*. Secondly, I identify with and relate intimately to the institutional goals and objectives of Bunker Hill Community College, particularly those which focus on:

- integrity, diversity, cultural competence and cross-cultural communication within the context of the discussion on curriculum and life-long learning;
- the creation of an educational environment that values the rich diversity of our student population and community.

This article draws heavily from my research into language learning in Papua New Guinea and considers that language is basic to any learning process. Another underlying assumption is that the language which is spoken during childhood and which continues in use is the one that gives the primary means of expression of thought, application of concepts and the development of ideas. This article also explores and illustrates the linguistic complexities of English language learning in Papua New Guinea, where 3.5 million people speak 869 living and distinct indigenous languages (one third of the world's) and where English is the official language of instruction. Papua New Guinea is without doubt the most linguistically and culturally pluralistic nation in the world, and the challenges that confront its educational planners should be of interest to all educators who teach in multi-lingual, multicultural learning environments.

Later in this article, I will attempt to draw parallels between my language teaching experience in Papua New Guinea and at Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC), where I have been an adjunct faculty member since September, 1999.

Culture and Language in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is situated in the South Pacific, north of Australia, and shares a land border to the west with Iran Jaya, a province of Indonesia. It has a land area of 462,840 square kilometers and a population of 3.5 million people. Most of the country consists of tropical forest and grassland on rugged, mountainous terrain. This environment has given rise to peoples who have traditionally lived in relatively small tribal groupings in comparative isolation from other groups. Despite urban drift, about eighty percent of the population still lives in rural villages and relies on subsistence farming.

While 869 distinct languages are spoken in Papua New Guinea, no indigenous linguistic or ethnic group predominates, either politically or numerically. The division of the island in the late 19th century amongst three colonial powers — the Netherlands, Britain and Germany — gave rise to the evolution of *lingua francas* (i.e. simplified languages evolved to facilitate communication amongst groups of people in the absence of common languages). The most popular lingua franca, *Tok Pisin*, or Neo-Melanesian Pidgin, is an English-based Pidgin language and is moving towards universality in Papua New Guinea. However, it is standard English, a relatively recently introduced language, that has become the official language of instruction.

English is the language of the educated elite, of formal business, of the professions and is widely used by the national news media and in debates in the national parliament. Politically, English plays a neutral role. It acts as a unifying force in a country where antagonism and suspicion amongst indigenous linguistic groups have resulted in ethnocentric attitudes toward each others' languages.

Language Policy for Public Education in Papua New Guinea

Education policy planners have long been challenged, not only by the linguistic complexity of Papua New Guinea, but by the desire to establish a common language policy. The debate over language in education has been bitter, controversial and divisive.

One group of educators is firmly of the view that English alone should be the medium of instruction in schools. This view has been reinforced by the desire to exercise government control and by the belief that English is a superior language. However, opponents of the "English only" policy argue that there would be difficulties teaching English successfully in village

schools, thus depriving eighty percent of the population of access to formal education. They further contend that children acquire initial fluency at home in their first language, or vernacular, and therefore early literacy through formal instruction at school should be achieved in the children's first language. While the debate for and against the English-only policy in education raged, church missions, intent on converting the local population to their brand of Christianity, embraced vernacular languages as a necessity in religious instruction.

As the controversy over language continues, fuelled and sustained by a spirited national debate amongst academics, the adoption of English as the official language has been confirmed by the national parliament. Of equal significance is the fact that Tok Pisin has gained national acceptance as the lingua franca.

Politicians across the ideological divide have come to terms with the suggestion that, in a country of over 869 languages, English could continue to play a neutral role as the unifying factor and as an instrument of national development.

Once it became clear that the educated elite and the government were bent on retaining English as the sole official language of instruction at all levels of the educational system, an English language curriculum was developed and embraced. The attitude of students and parents toward English has changed because it is now regarded as an asset which must be acquired in order to succeed in school. As a matter of fact, the acquisition of literacy in English is now seen as a measure of one's level of educational attainment.

However, even though English has been embraced as the medium of instruction for the last three generations, it has failed to live up to the expectations of the majority of Papua New Guineans, both as an appropriate medium of communication and as the language of education. According to some commentators, the failure of the government to recognize the relevance and importance of early literacy in a language with which students are familiar in elementary school has led to disastrous results.

Given the fact that English has been the official language at all levels of formal education and that the vast majority of Papua New Guinean students are confronted with this language for the first time upon the start of schooling, it is not surprising that there are difficulties in the teaching and learning of this language. English as a medium of instruction has brought about the mystification of knowledge rather than facilitating access to it.

Academic Performance in English

My study showed that the performance of Papua New Guinean students in English is influenced by a number of variables, including:

- the fact that teaching and learning takes place in an unfamiliar language in the early stages of the formal education system;
- the socio-economic status and linguistic background of parents and students;
- the linguistic environment of students at home and at school;
- the English language competence of teachers;
- physical environment and the level of teaching resources available to schools;
- the approach to teaching English;
- the English curriculum.

In particular, my study attempted to find out if the policy of requiring students to acquire initial literacy in a second language had any influence on their ability to grasp concepts and develop ideas in the second language with the same competence as their first (native) language.

To appreciate the scope of this research, one has to recognize that the vast majority of Papua New Guineans are competent speakers of at least four indigenous languages. While English remains the official language of instruction in education, it has been proposed that the primary education structure should allow students to receive instruction in a familiar language when they commence school. This reform is based on the assumption that unless children begin literacy instruction in a language that they already speak, they begin the whole process of education at a serious disadvantage.

In most societies, children are exposed first to a written form of a language they have already begun to master orally. Initially, what appear to be meaningless squiggles become associated with the sounds they represent, so that with several years of exposure, letters and groups of letters can automatically access a phonological code. Words for which the meaning is not known can nonetheless be pronounced. This skill can also be transferred to other languages provided that they are written in a familiar alphabet. This means that children and adults alike are capable of pronouncing foreign words, albeit with difficulty and without necessarily knowing the meaning of the words.

If the sounds of language are not associated with any written representation, then the link between letter and sound, which gives letters their linguistic status, cannot be built upon. As a class of visuospatial stimuli, words have a special status, only because of the sounds we have learned to associate with them and the meanings we ascribe to collections of these sounds.

According to the 1991 *Education Sector Review* commissioned by the National Department of Education, "the current practice of requiring all children to acquire initial literacy in a foreign language has resulted in many school leavers remaining functionally illiterate in any language."

Papua New Guinea is probably amongst a very few countries in which initial instruction at the commencement of schooling is, for the majority of children, in an unfamiliar language. No one disputes the use of English as a unifying force and its role in national development. However, many education planners hold the view that learners should acquire early education and initial literacy in a familiar medium and later transfer their abilities to English or any other national language.

On to Boston

As an instructor of first year college writing skills at Bunker Hill Community College, I first entered the classroom adequately prepared to provide instruction in standard written English to what I expected to be a homogeneous student population. However, long before the end of my first lesson, it became abundantly clear that I would, as I had experienced in Papua New Guinea, have the opportunity to embrace the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of the student population.

There is no doubt that BHCC ranks amongst the most linguistically diverse populations in community colleges. A survey made in October, 1999 by the International Center concluded that:

> *The distinctive feature of BHCC's international programming is that it is an integral element of campus life and not a stand-alone component of the college's International Center. BHCC is one of the most diverse colleges in the U.S., with 53 percent of students reporting themselves as ethnic minorities. Almost 40 percent of students speak a native language other than English and more than 550 English as a second language students attend each semester. The college currently enrolls 297 international students from 68 countries. BHCC has taken advantage of*

> *this diversity to develop an inclusive environment where international and multicultural activities are an essential and equal component of the day-to-day activities at the college. (Huhra 1)*

In the last three decades, one of the challenges for English instructors at the college has been to wrestle with the various dialects of English within the context of the curriculum on standard written English. Today, the challenge includes recognizing the richness and value of these dialects and teaching students to appreciate the linguistic distinctiveness inherent in, for example, African American English, Irish American English, and Latino American English.

Added to the mix of dialects in the classroom are new elements of linguistic diversity precipitated by large-scale immigration from all parts of the world and the open admission policy of community colleges.

Instructors should no longer regard language learning difficulties as problems to be avoided, but rather as opportunities to apply linguistic skills. As a language instructor in a multicultural classroom, I strive to cast myself in the cultural and linguistic environment of my students, thus enabling me to help them acquire skills and linguistic competence essential for student success.

To be successful in a multicultural language classroom, instructors of English must have an appreciation of:

- the relationship between culture and language;
- the influence of the native or first language on second language acquisition;
- attitude of the students towards English;
- the factors which may exert influence on English competency;
- writing expertise and second language proficiency;
- the age factor in both first and second language acquisition, and
- the factors that influence first language acquisition.

Conclusion

From Papua New Guinea to Bunker Hill Community College, multicultural classrooms and linguistic diversity present exciting challenges and opportunities for innovative and creative curriculum development. At Bunker Hill Community College, there is undoubtedly an opportunity for

instructors to learn from the experiments of the past and thus to embrace and celebrate the linguistic diversity of our student population in imaginative ways.

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LEARNING TO SERVE

Rita Frey and Mong Ngoc Manh

Lorraine Trethewey

Michelle Schweitzer and Paula Velluto

The Art of Caring: Transcending Language and Culture

Rita Frey and Mong Ngoc Manh

The students of the Allied Health Certificate Programs bring to the world of health care a varied assortment of skills. Many skills are diligently learned in the classroom, the skills lab, and the chronic and acute care settings in which they do their internships. An interest in people and a desire to work in a health care setting are standard. What is not standard is the intense desire to learn, serve, and minister to those who are in dire need of care — both physical and mental.

Students write journals to record their experiences from their internships at health care facilities. As teachers, we read the journals to pick up hints of problems and concerns and to gain an insight into the student's thought processes. Every year, our program publishes the pamphlet, *Reflections on an Internship*, which features quotes from the students' journals.

Mong Ngoc Manh, a student in the ESL Patient Care Assistant Program, wrote an extraordinary journal of her internship experiences at Brigham and Women's Hospital. She came to the United States in 1992 from a small village in Vietnam. Mong spent most of her childhood suffering from an illness which caused high fevers. Her mother and her aunt nursed her so well that now her health is better. Out of her past experiences with sickness and her deep appreciation for the devoted care she received grew a desire to return that favor of care.

In the high-tech medical world, often the simplest of techniques can be the most therapeutic: the touch of a hand, the sound of a voice, the sensitivity shown in the eyes. Mong's journal reflects this ability to relate to the sufferings of her patients and to care for them with all her heart. As I read Mong Ngoc Manh's journal, I was struck by the sheer poetry of her writing. One or two quotes from her writings are not enough to do justice to the depth of feeling this young woman brings to the world around her. With Mong's permission, I would like to share these glimpses into her life and inner thoughts.

2/7/2000 (the night before beginning her internship)

I'm going to start my internship at Brigham & Women's Hospital tomorrow. Now I'm preoccupied with mingled feelings. I went there last Thursday to find out about the transportation. It's pretty far from my house. It takes me an hour and a half to get there. My parents worry about me very much because I rarely go out alone all day. My father wants to drive me to Haymarket Station because he doesn't feel that it is safe to let me go alone in the early morning. In order to ease my father's anxiety, I accept his drive on the first day of my internship.

I'm usually confused in a new environment. To make myself comfortable and relieve my worry, I continually think of the saying, "First steps count." I wonder whether the atmosphere in the hospital is friendly or severe. Are the doctors and the nurses very busy there? English is my second language. Will they understand and help me perform their orders by speaking slowly and explaining what I don't understand? I am afraid to think that I will be in an emergency and misunderstand something that the nurse orders and do something to harm the patient.

Besides my English barrier, I am a slow person. I only do fast what I have done many times before, so going to an internship at a faraway hospital, working with the new staff there, I think I may do something awkward and unskilled. I console myself with the knowledge that I will learn and improve my skills a lot in a real hospital.

I struggle with my weakness and convince myself that everything will be OK. Tomorrow, I will try to keep my composure and be ready to learn. I hope so!

2/8/2000 (The day of the internship arrives.)

This morning I went to my internship 30 minutes earlier than the ordered time of 7:00 am. My father was so concerned to hurry me to wake up. When I got there, I had to wait until 8:00 to meet anyone. At last, I was introduced to a PCA (Patient Care Assistant) named Tony and went along with her for the rest of the morning. She was very nice. She taught me a lot today. When I didn't understand something, she explained it clearly and enthusiastically. The weather outside is very cold, but my heart inside is really warm when I sit silently to reminisce about what I did this morning. I promise myself I will work with my heart and hands next Thursday.

2/10/2000 (The internship progresses.)

Today, I feel lighthearted because I did some useful things to help some patients. I was more familiar with the job. Although I still am not handy when I am working, I am beginning to understand what I am doing, right or wrong. I made mistakes and I learned, and then I changed.

As I helped my PCA friend deal with personal care, I thought about Mother Teresa. She had sacrificed all her life to help the utterly miserable people without the modern equipment like we have. She did things only with her hands. I think that sometime in my future I may need help like the patients I take care of now. I was an ill child and received a lot of help from nursing, so my care of the very sick patients is a way to return the favor. It is also like sowing rice seeds now to provide against hunger later.

2/16/2000

Yesterday I was too tired to write in my journal, so I went to bed earlier than usual. My internship yesterday was better. I worked along with Tony in good harmony. I was moved when I caressed an old lady as I was cleaning her. She whispered, "I love you but I can't speak." I don't know which sickness she has. Her left hand is black and blue. Her hip is recovering from surgery. She is sometimes unconscious and is sleepy all the time. We cleaned her more often than the other patients in the wing because she needed it. Poor her! Her husband keeps vigil beside her bed warmheartedly.

I know some nurses. Some of them are indifferent and some are friendly. That isn't because they are apathetic to me, but they are so busy with their duties. When I need help, they are fully prepared to help me. Fulfilling my duty is a silent word to thank them, who bring life to others.

2/17/2000

I was more familiar with the hospital sights and smells. I didn't have to take Tylenol at the end of the day, as I used to do before. Thank God! I feel happy and deeply grateful early every morning when I mingle into the group of people to rush for the bus or train. Everybody around me is working so hard for themselves and for others. I realize the responsibility that I have to work harder to bring happiness to myself and to others who need help.

2/29/2000

I admire the nurses who are very patient, alert and friendly with their patients. They are like tender mothers who forget themselves to think about

others. I usually see many nurses still working when I am eating lunch. Sometimes they only grab some chips, and then go back to work. Their responsibility is very noble. I'm proud to be on their team, working heartily to bring happiness to others.

4/3/2000 (near the end of her internship)

On the subway when I went home, my friend reminded me that my internship had ended. That day I was full of satisfaction. I could understand the nurses' orders and communicate with the patients better. This had been my barrier on the first day, but now I feel more comfortable with communication.

I learned rather much over my internship. I feel ready to work now. I think, secretly in my mind, that to become a registered nurse is the goal of my life.

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Service Learning: Meeting the Institutional Goals

Lorraine Trethewey

Service learning is a powerful form of experiential learning in which the emphasis shifts from teaching to learning. Students put what they are learning in class into practice through providing needed services to community-based organizations. While this makes academic content come alive, it is the experiential learning brought back into the classroom that excites and motivates students. When they reflect on their experiences, reactions and feelings, most students consistently report that this is the best way to learn. One student in my first service learning course said, at the end of the semester, "I can't believe this semester is over already. I want to cry!" She never said that at the end of the three previous courses she had taken with me.

When the ten institutional goals of Bunker Hill Community College were announced in 1999, my initial reaction was, "Service learning already includes all of those!" As I looked at each of these goals in more depth, I began to realize the many ways that service learning is integrally related to each one. What follows is my view of this intergration.

Goal I: Customer Service

Bunker Hill Community College will offer student-friendly services at accessible educational sites.

Students use many of the services offered at the college as part of their service learning courses. The computer lab and the library really become "friendly" educational sites rather than realms of the unknown. I think of Maggy, a student still struggling with English, but so determined to do a good job on her service learning reports that she learned *PowerPoint*. The reports were impressive and a year later she is motivating other students to take as much pride in their work as she did.

The Career and Placement Center is another valuable customer service that plays an important role in service learning. Students learn valuable job and life skills during their projects. The center staff then help the students present these accomplishments in a professional manner on their resumes. In some cases, this is the only practical job experience they are able to include.

Goal II: Diversity

Bunker Hill Community College will continue to value the diversity of our communities, to demonstrate cultural competence, and to increase institutional diversity in staff and student populations.

Diversity is all around us at Bunker Hill Community College, in the classroom and in the communities we serve. Some students experience interaction with people from different cultures for the first time through meeting their classmates. With service learning, these interactions are usually deeper as students reflect on and discuss their common learning experiences. Most express thoughts similar to these journal entries:

> *Class discussion was my favorite part of the project because we all have the opportunity to exchange our own ideas...*
>
> *Each student provided the class with a good point about diversity...*
>
> *I was surprised when I heard the other students felt the same way I did about meeting the disabled adults. I thought I was the only one who was nervous.*

Students frequently talk about learning to get along with people from other cultures through working in groups, both in and out of the classroom. They are often surprised to find that they have more in common with each other than they first thought.

Beyond the classroom, the service learning experience often brings students into contact with people for whom they can act as role models. The juvenile delinquency course is one example. For ten weeks, students enrolled in this class visit young people much like themselves in age and ethnicity, but who are being held at an institution while awaiting trial for various crimes. The students find that many of the young people come from the same neighborhoods and had some similar experiences. As they explore what paths brought them to one place or the other, both groups learn from each other. One of the best outcomes of this project becomes evident when the young people ask to learn more about how they, too, can go to college. They began to see that there are alternatives for them.

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Another example is the 23-year-old student who was part of a service learning project which planned and implemented an intergenerational social event at a public housing development. In his reflection journal, he remarked that he had never met a senior citizen before:

> *At first I felt isolated and thought I was going to be left out by them. I was wrong. I conversed with most of them and they were nice to me. This day was when I knew I wanted to be part of the event. I wanted to know what it felt like being young and associating with an older generation. When I saw all those people dancing, it was exciting to see because I don't think I had ever seen senior citizens dancing with kids they didn't even know.*

Bunker Hill Community College students involved in service learning projects come from more than thirty countries of origin and represent a wide range of all ages and backgrounds. Their community partners have included adults with physical disabilities, pre-school and middle school children, teenagers, and people with chronic illness. When students work with community-based organizations, they may also provide a variety of services. Both students and community partners are enriched by exposure to the diversity of the world as they learn to work with people from different backgrounds, abilities, ages, and experiences.

Goal III: Facility

Bunker Hill Community College will provide well-maintained and safe facilities with continuing improvements and expansions.

Service learning helps expand the use of college facilities by bringing more people from the community onto the campus to make use of these resources. Just-A-Start (a youth development program based in Cambridge, Massachusetts) clients use our computer labs to receive tutoring from Microsoft Office students who are eager and proud to share their skills and become mentors.

Students from the Edwards Middle School come to the BHCC science lab to be awed by a variety of presentations from the astronomy class. The astronomy students even made a "comet" for them out of dry ice! We share our resources in many ways with these and other community partners as they become our guests. Young people experience a real college that they might attend some day. Adults see new horizons leading to new worlds. Through sharing our facilities, we truly become a part of our community.

Goal IV: Flexibility

Bunker Hill Community College will respond flexibly to the changing educational needs of students, staff and external communities.

Flexibility is at the core of service learning. Teachers are challenged to give life to academics in a way that provides a meaningful service to communities and connects students to the real world. Picture a smiling, excited group of English as a second language students conducting a voter registration drive in the main lobby; they registered fifty five voters. Another ESL group learns the story of a Charlestown resident as they spruce up the park dedicated in his honor. Both groups learn about American culture, civic responsibility, honor and democracy as they improve their English language skills. A third group of ESL students create a book of fables from their native lands and then bring their tales of multiculturalism to second and fifth graders in Milton, Massachusetts — a population not likely to otherwise meet people from more than a dozen cultures all in one day.

Service learning does, indeed, help to meet changing educational needs of students, staff and external communities. Teachers can create a new curriculum, a new class environment, and new ways of stimulating creativity. The whole neighborhood is out there to become part of the learning experience. From computer science and calligraphy to management and math, creative instructors from every discipline can use service learning.

Goal V: Funding

Bunker Hill Community College will develop new sources of funding to support programs, staffing and facilities while keeping costs to students affordable.

Service learning came to Bunker Hill Community College through funding by the Massachusetts Campus Compact under a grant from the Corporation for National Service. This same source has also provided us with Americorps VISTA volunteers for three consecutive years. Through this funding, we were able to establish the current program and build a database of more than forty community agencies with whom we work. This valuable network helps the college establish a positive image in our local communities.

The success of these grants brought us funding from The State University of New York at Oneonta through a Kellogg Foundation Grant with which to establish Students Serving Communities, a student-run community service volunteer center. Other funding possibilities continue to emerge as the service learning movement expands nationally and internationally.

Goal VI: Global Learning

Bunker Hill Community College will develop global learning opportunities that will expand the character, diversity and curriculum of the institution.

Global learning at BHCC takes place within the walls of the facility as well as outside in the community and the world. The diversity of our student population gives faculty the opportunity to incorporate global learning into nearly every discipline. In one recent meeting and special events planning course, students from ten different areas of the world held a four hour multicultural event to celebrate their cultures, countries, music and food. One American student called the event a "four-hour world tour." She decorated a cake with hearts and the words, "Today, the world is yours."

The event began with a dancing exhibition, followed by cultural presentations and then a buffet lunch which was truly international. Rice from Ecuador and from Haiti shared the table with *pierogi* from Poland, chicken wings from Jamaica, and many other ethnic specialties prepared by the students.

The character of the course and curriculum expand as students become involved with each other and begin to acquire a global perspective on a range of events and issues. Hurricanes and disasters in other countries take on personal meaning when students have classmates from those countries and often have family there. The students engaged in service learning projects bring this growing global awareness into the communities they serve, which in turn has a positive influence on students, faculty and community by expanding opportunities to break down stereotypes related to race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, or handicap. On a broader scale, the close interaction of students from diverse backgrounds which is fostered by the service learning experience encourages participants to pursue lifelong learning on a global level, beyond their current environment.

Goal VII: Lifelong Learning

Bunker Hill Community College will provide lifelong learning, educational partnerships, retraining and transitional skills to meet the needs of the college and the community.

Service learning is about lifelong learning. Through the integration of service with academics and through the critical reflection activities, students arrive at a better understanding of how the classroom material fits into the real world. Non-traditional students are typically already lifelong learners

who appreciate the opportunity service learning provides for them to apply their life skills to academics. One student (with a 4.0 average) said that she could learn from the text and get a good grade on a test (which she would) and forget what she learned as soon as the test was over. Many students stress that they not only learn better but really "get" what they are learning because they can see it in action. They continue to apply what they have learned as they go through other experiences.

Students gather transitional skills through their service experience. For instance, students learn what is expected in the work world such as dress, time commitment, and accuracy. Not only do they learn to connect with others through tutoring, mentoring and teamwork, but they also strengthen writing and communication skills through letter writing, reports and e-mails with their community partners and peers.

In reflecting on the multicultural event mentioned above, all the participants reported that it was very important for them to see how everyone took on responsibility and contributed to the success of the event. One student wrote about working late hours the night before and waking up sick with a cold. She confided that she just wanted to stay home and sleep, but because she knew everyone was counting on the food she was preparing, she forced herself to get up and cook, gather all of the items she needed for her table, and came to school. She reflected on how this event had changed her sense of responsibility and how glad she was that she had done what she had promised to do. This type of learning, in which students learn that their actions can affect others beyond themselves, may be viewed as a valuable transitional skill that will be remembered and applied throughout their lives.

Goal VIII: Partnerships

Bunker Hill Community College will build and enhance partnerships with business and industry, community organizations, and educational institutions.

Without our community-based organization partnerships, there could be no service learning. Some of our partners include middle schools, high schools, multi-service agencies, agencies for people in transition from welfare, and agencies that work with the disabled and elderly. Service learning helps strengthen partnerships with the community through these agencies and helps create long-term relationships among the college, the organizations, and the community.

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In a typical service learning partnership, a community agency identifies and defines certain needs. We then work together to create a service learning project to fill them. The VISTA volunteer helps match the agency's needs with the appropriate teacher and course.

As we develop relationships in the communities, networks are created which also extend to student volunteer efforts such as Students Serving Communities (described above). Many students first learn about an agency and its work through a service learning project and then continue to volunteer with the agency when the course is completed. This, of course, ties into the lifelong learning goal (Goal VII) as well as the student success goal (Goal IX).

These collaborations with non-profit agencies can lead to further partnerships with business and industry as many business and industry leaders are closely involved with their communities and community-based organizations.

Goal IX: Student Success

Bunker Hill Community College will provide all students with the quality education and support services necessary to achieve academic competencies and realize personal goals.

Service learning *is* quality education. The key component of service learning is enriching what is learned in the classroom. It does not compromise the academic component of the course but rather enhances it by connecting the academic work with experiential service. The students are supported in their service endeavors by both the faculty and the on-site supervisor of their partner organization. Through reflection, the students are able to assess what they have learned in the course and how both the service and the academic material connect to their own lives and the world.

Students rate their own success in reflection papers. One of the major themes of this success is how they have built their self-esteem. Even when they may not use the exact words, they express the thought, "I never knew I could do this," or "I really felt good about myself because I was a part of this."

One student who tended to be out of the mainstream wrote, "I had to take the responsibility to make decisions and be reliable to the other group members. For some reason, I took more pride in my schoolwork this semester than I have in others. I am glad I took part in this." Another student reported, "I did my best to contribute in as many areas as I could, and I was

able to accomplish every single detail that I put on my checklist. I feel good and proud about myself that I was able to achieve my goal. I learned and believe in myself that I can do something like this (work with people who have physical disabilities). It helped me believe in myself!"

Often, service learning is a door to realizing personal goals. By engaging in service to others, students have the opportunity to observe the effects of their actions on the welfare of others and form connections between this experience and their chosen careers or fields of study.

Goal X: Technology

Bunker Hill Community College will expand and integrate technology across teaching and learning, administrative and student support services.

At BHCC, the Computer Science Department leads the other disciplines in service learning. At least six different computer courses have used service learning in a variety of ways. In one course, students learn by creating Web pages for non-profit agencies. Several of the courses that include service learning involve the use of technology as a teaching and learning tool. For example, students have worked at agencies where their computer skills are needed. They have tutored diverse groups of learners in computer skills, including advanced skills which prepare the recipients for jobs.

Most students at BHCC use technology regularly for communication, research and reports. Their computer skills and knowledge are strengthened, and they learn the multiple uses of evolving technologies. Service learning projects often provide a means to bring computer skills to the diverse populations served by community-based organizations. In a recently offered introductory level course, many students said they intended to continue to volunteer at their service learning agencies because they enjoyed the experience and also learned so much. As one student reflected, "Serving the community has been a very beneficial experience for me. It is an experience that will push me toward similar ones...I hope Bunker Hill continues to serve people in this way...it makes me happy to be attending the school."

Fables From Around the World: Promoting Cultural Understanding

Michelle Schweitzer and Paula Velluto

On Thursday, May 4th, 2000, sixteen advanced English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students from thirteen different countries found themselves in the Cunningham Elementary School in Milton, Massachusetts as the culmination of a semester-long service learning project at Bunker Hill Community College. These sixteen students were also part of the integrated course cluster program, a Title III initiative which combines ESL and content classes. The students were studying advanced ESL writing, reading and note-taking with Professor Michelle Schweitzer and a basic computer course with Professor Paula Velluto. At the beginning of the semester, when we asked our students what they thought service learning was, none of them had any idea. Fifteen weeks later, it was crystal clear to all of them.

We began our project by reading, discussing and analyzing fables from around the world and some of their universal themes. Then the students wrote fables that they had heard or read in their native countries. They wrote, edited and rewrote until they were happy with what they had produced. In Professor Velluto's class, the students typed their fables using the word processing program they had learned and illustrated their stories with art found on the Internet and graphics they had scanned in. It was at this point, when the students saw their words "wrapped around" illustrations, that this task became more than just another essay assignment. They took ownership and wanted the final products to be perfect, to be "publishable." The students also wrote brief introductory paragraphs about themselves, and included interesting cultural differences. These introductions were inserted under the digital photographs Professor Velluto had taken of them. The next step was to practice reading the fables in front of the class and in front of a camera. For all of the students, this was the first time they were able to see themselves speaking English. Their reactions were mixed, but ultimately, it

was a great learning experience. However, this project required more than just writing, editing, and reading to each other. We were going to be "performing" our fables in front of children, so we practiced this type of oral communication, keeping our audience in mind.

Finally on May 4th, we all traveled to the Cunningham Elementary School in Milton. We began by reading and discussing some of the easier fables with a second-grade class. The children were delighted and asked interesting questions about cultural diversity to this group of young adults who were struggling to learn *their* native language.

Then our students divided into small groups and proceeded to four fifth-grade classes to read their fables again. The BHCC students were absolutely fantastic! They read with great enthusiasm and were able to overcome the dread they each had about speaking English in front of Americans, even small Americans. In the fifth grade classes, the children eagerly discussed the fables and the morals with our students. The fifth-graders asked perceptive questions about cultural differences and cultural traditions; they also wanted to know why the students had made such long journeys away from family, friends and everything familiar. The answers to these questions fascinated the youngsters, whose worlds were broadened just a bit on this day. One of our students, Keiko Toda, said it best in her reflection journal: "I think understanding about cultural differences helps get rid of any stereotypes and discrimination."

Following the visit to the elementary school, we asked our students again what service learning was. This time, the answer was clear for all of them. In her reflection journal, Karen Tang wrote, "Community service learning is a project that a group of people work out together, and then go into a community to serve the community. The purpose of that is both of them learn from each other." Irina Knyazhitskaya wrote, "My favorite part of this project was answering the children's questions. They wanted to know about my country, and when I told them about the Ukraine, the children's eyes flashed. I think my entire class did a very good job, not only for us, but first of all for the children. We all gave information about different countries through fables."

This project was and will always be memorable. It brought our students closer together on a personal level — something teachers don't always see, but certainly welcome. Because our students "owned" their fables and the fable book, they worked hard to create something perfect, something that they hoped would work for the children of Milton.

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Service learning combines community service and classroom instruction. In terms of the academic skills learned and reinforced, our students improved their reading skills and developed their vocabularies. They also refined their writing and editing skills and reinforced their word processing abilities. Their ability to navigate the Internet efficiently increased as well. Finally, in terms of oral communication, the students gained a tremendous amount of confidence in themselves and in their ability to speak their new language. Before we left the Cunningham School, we gave the children BHCC folders and pencils. After reading our students' reflection journals, we think they would all agree that we left the children with a lot more than those two small gifts.

The reflection journals which follow illustrate the quality of the student's work, the extent of their enthusiasm, and the level of awareness gained through their participation in this project.

Keiko Tada (Japan)

I enjoyed participating in this project. We had a great opportunity to share our cultures and traditions with American school children. It is wonderful that children are interested in differences between the United States and other countries. I think their understanding about cultural differences helps get rid of any stereotypes and discrimination. First, I learned there are several words that cannot translate exactly from Japanese into English because of cultural differences. I thought about how I could tell the readers about the subtle nuances — I mean this project helped me to reinforce my translating skills. Also, I learned how to edit pictures and text together. I, of course, enjoyed visiting the elementary school and telling my story to the children. I am impressed with the children's attitude toward us. They seemed to enjoy our visit. They could get new knowledge about different cultures, and the moral of the fables was good for them. Community service learning is that people share something like feelings, knowledge, or experience throughout activities.

Karen Tang (China)

Finally, we finished our project. We wrote a fable from our own culture, and we brought joy into an elementary classroom by reading the fables to the children. We had a very good time, and we enjoyed it a lot. I especially enjoyed participating in this project. I felt like I went back to my childhood when we stepped into the school. I have learned that whenever I speak

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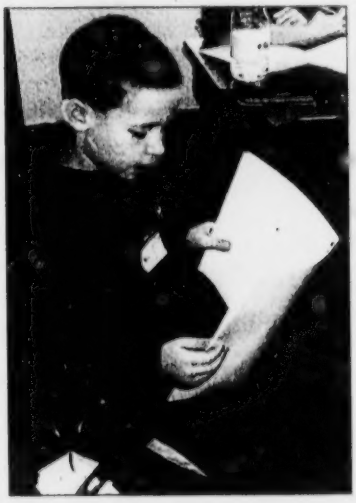
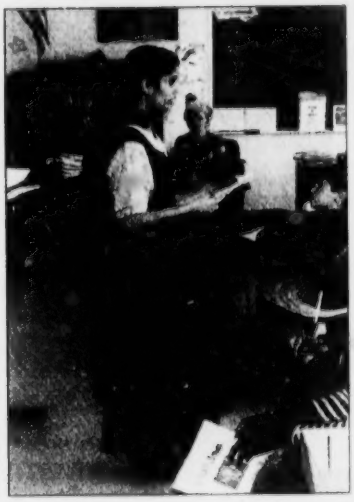
Fifth-graders listen intently while Antonio Alves, a native of Cape Verde, reads his fable.

(Photo by Paula Velluto)



Second-grader Ben McCarthy reads along in the book of fables created by the ESL students.

(Photo by Paula Velluto)



Aysha Chikhalia explains a cultural difference between India and the United States.

(Photo by Paula Velluto)

BHCC students arriving at Cunningham Elementary School.

(Photo by Paula Velluto)

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English, my audience will never laugh at my wrong pronunciation. Because of my pronunciation, I was always worrying that people wouldn't understand when I talked. Therefore, I was shy to speak up before. Since I experienced this project, I have more confidence to talk. Moreover, I will often speak up in a class to ask more questions. That was my weakness. In addition, I think those children also had fun to learn about different cultures and to hear some interesting stories with helpful morals. That was really a wonderful experience, and I won't forget about that. I remember the beginning of the semester, our professor asked us about community service learning, and nobody could answer that. Now, I also learned about what that is through this project. Community service learning is a project that a group of people develop together, and then go into a community to provide service to its people. The outcome of service learning is that both the group of people and the community lea:n from each other.

WAYS OF LEARNING

Kevin Finnigan

Megon Barrow

Claire I. Donahue

Adele A. Hamblett and Irene A. Sancinito

Diane M. Smith

Carole Center

Everything I Know about Teaching Can Be Learned from a Bumper Sticker

Kevin Finnigan

Sooner or later, all teachers are struck by the sad realization that most people have an opinion about how we can do our jobs better and no compunction about letting us know just what that is. Thus, I was immediately suspicious when our chipper consultant from the Harvard School of Education introduced Classroom Action Research as the latest cure for our incompetence. I smiled, remembering that my sister, a fierce veteran teacher in public schools, calls these people "insultants."

It didn't take this one long to betray her unfamiliarity with academic life outside the ivied walls. In particular, it hardly seemed necessary to tell teachers of skills development courses to design assignments that monitor and assess student learning. Reading and writing courses — the ones I teach anyway — consist of a constant stream of homework assignments and in-class exercises. With the stack of bulging folders I get to lug home every night, who needs "Classroom Action Techniques"? Any more feedback and I'd have to give up sleeping.

Still, as someone I really hate once said, you can learn something from everyone you meet. What became clear as we discussed the CAR approach was that the central idea was sound: all good teaching evolves from constant assessment of how much students are learning. However, I'm resistant to the "recipe" approach promoted by the style of the *Classroom Action Techniques* (Angelo and Cross 1993) handbook. More important than canned classroom activities is the time to reflect on what happened in our classes and the willingness and opportunity to analyze the effects of our teaching, to explore the "how," "why," and "how well" of what we do.

Of course, I have always gauged my effectiveness by measuring student learning, particularly on an individual basis. I know what my students need to learn and I watch their progress (or the lack of it) in the assignments

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building up in their folders throughout the semester. However, I have found that the evaluation of student work and the creation of materials and lessons eat up all of my psychic energy during the school year. Reflection on the effectiveness of my approach, the materials, and my own performance, I save for the summer months and my beach chair and mostly never get around to it.

In the semester following the initial CAR workshop, I started to judge my work in the classroom as harshly as I do my students'. I wasn't really doing anything differently, but a newly critical eye on what was happening in both my college writing and reading skills courses led to a minor epiphany that has helped shape every class I have planned since then.

For several semesters now, I have taught College Writing I as a seminar in which we explore issues of teaching and learning. To that end, I designed a sequence of structured reading and writing assignments to lead students to a discovery of what they know about teaching and learning and how their knowledge reflects or contradicts conventional wisdom or established theory. Writing assignments help prepare students for class discussion, understand reading assignments, and generate ideas for their formal writing experiences.

During the semester following the CAR training, I was leading a class through a brief exercise that prepares the students for their first writing assignment. We were generating a list of what we believe are essential elements in teaching and learning. What factors must be present if learning is to take place? What elements hinder or prevent learning? How do we know this?

In this exercise, I wanted students to share truths they firmly believe about education and then challenge them by asking where they got the idea. The point of the exercise — and the writing assignment that follows — is to demonstrate that what we learn as we live our lives is the primary source of our knowledge. Once we can identify and express what we know, we can evaluate these ideas and use them as the starting point for understanding and evaluating the ideas of others.

As usual, their answers were not surprising, and probably not too off the mark. After all, today everyone — even Massachusetts Governor Paul Cellucci — is an expert on education. Some answers were too general: "We need good teachers." "Some of my teachers had really bad attitudes." Others were useful and more specific: "There must be open communication." "Teachers must be caring."

There was truth in all of the answers, but both the class and the teacher had real difficulty isolating crucial principles, the essential elements without which the learning bulb will just not light. Later, looking over the list and reading the resulting papers, one thing struck me. Most of what the group thought of as crucial to learning involved the teacher: what this person must know, how this person must behave, what important personal characteristics this person must have.

At first, I didn't understand why this should bother me. To be honest, what little self-esteem I can muster hinges on my secret belief that I am a "good" teacher. In truth, however, it is amazing that I am able to maintain this illusion in the face of the staggering amount of failure I participate in as a teacher of developmental courses. Armed with the classroom action demand for constant assessment and this new queasiness about the emphasis on the teacher as the focal point of learning, I tentatively began to evaluate what I was doing in the second-level reading class I was teaching that semester.

Because my approach to reading skills development involves changing what students see as the act of reading, they must understand the background of the process they will be practicing all semester. This is knowledge I have, they need, yet I never questioned the assumption that typical "sage on the stage" sessions are the best way to make it happen.

That semester, like always, I began the reading course with a series of three full-fledged, "college-style" lectures. The first lecture described how the memory works — the storage system metaphor and the current physiological model. The second lecture introduced the reading process the students practice throughout the semester (essentially previewing, reading/note-taking and recoding). I spent some time in this lecture comparing both processes, explaining how the reading process reflects what we know about memory and cognitive brain functioning. The students needed to understand that remembering and forgetting, the physical corollary to remembering and forgetting, and the reading process are, in fact, the same thing.

A third lecture explained the process of definition. In this lecture, I showed the class that recognizing important terms and concepts in the readings and completing the three tasks of definition — categorization, differentiation, and exemplification — promote efficient learning because they parallel important steps in the reading/memory processes.

After my entertaining lectures (with elegant overheads), the students were assigned a reading journal using a psychology textbook chapter about memory, accompanied by a handout giving step-by-step instructions on how to document their work in all stages of the reading process. In the previewing stage, they were to note certain information available in the reading by skimming. I asked the class to complete this step by predicting the topic and main point. Next, the students had to work through the article more carefully, noting all significant information and recognizing how closely they had predicted the content. When they had finished reading and taking notes, they were to list the important terms and concepts in the chapter and create complete definitions in their own words.

As a classroom action technique of sorts, the assignment worked too well; the results were disheartening. While the lecture classes were entertaining and fun (honest, the students always gave me rave reviews), their homework indicated that most did not get the point of the lectures, our discussions, my handouts or even the elaborate diagrams I drew on the board.

However, the next exercise, as always, got great results. I organize this as a classroom activity to illustrate how memory works. You may have played this children's travel game, "In My Grandmother's Trunk," with your family.

First, I flashed on the screen a list of 26 unrelated items that had to be learned. I gave the students just enough time to read the list before whipping it off the screen. In a sense, they now had the information in "iconic sensory store." Then I asked them how they would learn the list. As you might expect, some said they would "memorize" it. Others would "study" it. No one could describe what action these verbs entail. Once again, I had this horrible vision of all these students running their eyeballs mindlessly over this list, or worse, chanting it aloud till they fall asleep.

I put it back on the screen and asked the students if they had noticed anything about the list. After a while, someone noticed that there are twenty-six items to learn and that it looked like there was one item for every letter in the alphabet: Alonzo Mourning, basketball, cartoon, doughnut, etc. Whipping the list off the screen, I had the group, person by person, recode the list in alphabetical order. First person: "In my grandmother's trunk, I packed Alonzo Mourning." Second person: "In my grandmother's trunk I packed Alonzo Mourning and a basketball." Third person: "In my grandmother's trunk, I packed Alonzo Mourning, a basketball and cartoon." We went around the room until the alphabet was complete. Interestingly, they did this without having the list in front of them. Someone always

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remembered the next item to add to the list simply by visualizing the list, even though the group had only seen the list briefly.

My kids love this game in the car, but the students complained. They didn't see the point of the exercise, they found the singsong repetition childish, and they hated reciting the list aloud in front of the group. It took a lot of my energy (and about 20 minutes) to get through the list.

When I told the class there would be a quiz on the list, the grumbling escalated. "Why didn't you tell us so we could write it down?" I explained that they had already "learned" this material, and that they needed only to review the list once or twice in their heads to fix it in long term memory. I love it that they didn't believe me.

That semester, on the night before I was to give the quiz, I blundered into a situation that I think reveals a basic truth about learning. The students expected that they would have to list all 26 items and that would be that. Having done this before, I knew that the students could all do this, even if they didn't. Without thinking much about it, I decided to use this opportunity to see how much of the first three lectures had sunk in, to see if they understood the concepts even if they couldn't apply them.

The quiz began with three questions. The first asked the students to define a term from the memory chapter and label the important parts of the definition. The second question asked them to describe the ways information is stored in the brain, and the third demanded that they state the stages in the reading process. Only questions four and five related to the list they had made in class. However, even here, I threw them a curve ball. Instead of asking them to list all the items, I decided I would ask only for the people and edible items from the list. After a chorus of angry protest, I collected the quizzes.

The results of the exercise were telling. Only a few students attempted to answer the questions relating to the three lectures. Of these, even fewer could define a word to the specifications discussed in class, maybe one or two could summon the three stages of the reading process, and absolutely no one remembered that information is stored in the brain in sensory stores, short term memory and long term memory. This was after at least four hours of very energetic "teaching" on my part and a writing assignment based on the lectures. As usual, everyone was delighted, and more than a little bit proud, that they remembered the people and the food in the list.

What does this tell us about what is essential to teaching and learning, and of the importance of the teacher? Is it essential that one be interested in the subject? Apparently not, since the list is devoid of sense, much less interest. Does one need a good teacher? My kids taught me the game. I suspect that all my great "teaching" was "show biz," not education.

The crucial difference in this teaching-learning experience is that the assignment demanded that students actively learn the material in a way that reflects and takes advantage of what we know about how people learn. The students consciously walked through the process. The exercise demanded that they look for the relationships between the items they were to learn, that they connect them to prior knowledge (the alphabet) and that they recode and rehearse the information in an organized, conscious manner. My elaborate lectures, my beautiful overheads might have been helpful, even fun. What was crucial, however, was the structure. Then I sat back and they "taught" themselves. As the bumper sticker with the swoosh says, "Just do it."

Several semesters ago when I decided to create a thematic base to both my reading and writing courses, when I began studying teaching and learning with my writing groups and language with my readers, I think I may have been unconsciously expressing a need to know more about what I am paid (too damned little) for. Part of being a "good" teacher is consciously and continually evaluating the assumptions about learning that frame the ways we teach.

This understanding has reshaped every aspect of my teaching. Every writing assignment I structure must clearly lead students in a meaningful process of discovery through communication. Each reading assignment must allow for a realistic, individual search for meaning. I must understand how humans do these things, create the opportunities for their achievement, then get out of the way.

My wife, who is a teacher and human relations consultant, often says, "We teach what we need to know." I used to nod my head in agreement when she said this, as I always do when something sounds both mysterious and "right." However, I was never really sure what she meant. In the light of what I am learning in my own classes, from my own students, this idea has started to make sense.

Review of "The Rewards of Learning"

Megon Barrow

Editors' Note:

This review was written in partial fulfillment of an assignment which asked for the student to choose and review an article, then relate it to the course content and to the student's own experience.

"The Rewards of Learning" by Paul Chance deals with the topic of using reinforcement in schools. The author begins by talking about the founder of educational psychology, Edward Lee Thorndike. Using himself as the subject of one of his own experiments, Thorndike attempted to draw a four-inch line with his eyes closed. After several days and some three thousand lines, his ability to draw a four-inch line was no better on the last day than it had been on the first day he started. There was no evidence of learning. The findings of Thorndike's experiment tested the very foundation of education at the time, which was the common assumption that "practice makes perfect." Instead, Thorndike concluded that practice alone is not sufficient for learning and is important only because it provides the opportunity for reinforcement.

In educational psychology, the term "reinforcement" refers to the procedure that strengthens a certain behavior. Chance's article states that hundreds of experimental studies have shown that reinforcement can improve both classroom conduct and the rate of learning. However, there has been a failure to make the most of reinforcement in our teaching system. In Chance's view, the schools need to educate future teachers on the nature of reinforcement.

Because the practice of reinforcement is powerful, its misuse can cause unwanted effects, a fact which has led some teachers to shy away from using it altogether. Another difficulty is that the optimal use of reinforcement

would mean teaching in a new way. Chance proposes that all of these arguments against reinforcement can be countered effectively. "A great deal of reinforcement is needed for optimal learning," he argues, ".. but not all of the reinforcement needs to come from the teacher. Reinforcement can be provided by computers, teaching devices, by parents, teachers aides, by students during peer teaching and cooperative learning (32)." Chance points out that some forms of reinforcement are considered detrimental because they reduce interest in the reinforced activity.

More importantly, there is a distinction made in this regard between extrinsic and intrinsic reinforcers, or rewards, in that only the extrinsic rewards are potentially harmful when misused. Extrinsic rewards come from an outside source, such as a teacher. The most ubiquitous extrinsic reward (and most effective) is praise. Intrinsic rewards are the ordinary, natural consequence of behavior. For example, we learn to read from the understanding we get from the printed word. The effectiveness of extrinsic rewards in teaching or maintaining good discipline is still undisputed. The question of whether inappropriate rewards adversely affect motivation is said to be not merely academic or of theoretical importance. According to Chance, it is of greater practical importance to the classroom teacher.

Researchers have studied the decline in motivation in relation to rewards and have found that it occurs only under certain circumstances. According to Chance, decline is most likely to occur when the initial interest in the activity is very high, when the rewards used are not reinforcers, and when the rewards are held out in advance as an incentive. One of the best ways to determine negative effects of rewards has to do with the nature of the reward contingency, which is the nature of the relationship between the behavior and its reward. Alyce Dickinson (qtd. in Chance 33) has identified three kinds of reward contingencies:

- *task-contingent:* a reward for merely participating in an activity, without regard for the standard of performance. Most studies have found a decline in interest with the use of task-contingent rewards.
- *performance-contingent:* a reward only given when a certain standard is achieved. Performance-contingent rewards sometimes produce negative results.
- *success-contingent:* the type of reward given for good performance, which might reflect either success or progress toward a goal. Success-contingent rewards do not have negative effects.

Chance supports Dickinson's conclusion that the danger of undermining students' motivation stems not from extrinsic rewards, but from the use of inappropriate reward contingencies. She claims that rewards reduce motivation when given without regard to performance or when the performance standard is so high that the student frequently fails. When students have a high rate of success and those successes are rewarded, the rewards do not have negative effects.

The author goes on to talk about the alternatives to rewards. He states that punishment and the threat of punishment have always been the most popular alternative to extrinsic rewards. Punishment is commonly used because it provides short-term results. Although punishment can motivate students to learn, it does not teach them. Punishment also has undesirable side effects. Students may cut class classes, drop out of school, become aggressive, lie, or cheat, to avoid the anxiety caused by punishment. Moreover, punishment in the form of criticism of performance also reduces interest in an activity.

Encouragement is considered an alternative to extrinsic rewards. However, like punishment, encouragement motivates but it does not teach. In Chance's view, the best alternative to extrinsic rewards is to present intrinsic rewards. Unlike extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards actually teach without depending on the teacher or some other person. The only problem with intrinsic rewards is that sometimes students lack the necessary skills to obtain them. The article concludes by making the point that while intrinsic rewards are important, they are insufficient in themselves as a means of producing efficient learning.

Comments

I found that this article had a direct correlation to my experience here at Bunker Hill Community College. In my psychology course, we discussed different types of reinforcement and how they effect conditioning and learning. From this perspective, it would seem that we learn through conditioning of some kind. I think that when you are conditioning someone you are providing reinforcers. I am very interested in the learning process and find the effects of conditioning to be really powerful. If misused, as mentioned in the article, there can be a lot of unwanted effects. What is even worse is that we use these conditioning techniques in our everyday lives without even knowing it, and without thought of the nature or effects of our reinforcers.

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Edward Lee Thorndike, whose work was reviewed in Chance's article, is also known for his work on learning and for his term, *law of effect*. After reading the findings of his research, I wondered how many people are actually aware of the fact that practice alone does not make perfect. I wish someone would tell that to one of my condescending teachers. The point made in the article about the negative effects of punishment is also very true. I think the way this instructor teaches is a form of punishment. Whenever she has to explain something, she tries to intimidate us with sarcasm and a condescending manner. I get very nervous whenever I have to go to her class, and being there causes me a lot of anxiety. When I leave that class, I don't even want to look at my textbook because of its negative association. Thinking about it makes my armpits sting right now! Oh, my God, what this article says is so true!

When I read that another response to punishment is aggression, I wondered how this kind of nonphysical punishment could lead to aggression. I just remembered how peeved I was one Friday after her class. I wanted to kick something or strangle her; I even used a swear word. My friend who saw me in this way was shocked, because I am not the kind of person that gets easily angered. Every time I left her class I felt like crying or crawling under a rock. I come from a country where physical punishment is allowed in schools, and although I have never been afraid of any of my teachers back there, I get scared even seeing this teacher in the hall.

Anyway, enough about her. She gives me the willies! The point is that I can relate this article to my college experiences, both positive and negative. Actually, thanks to Chance's article, I just realized, what causes one of my major anxieties. Writing about it just now has been like starting self-analysis. However, now that I have identified the source of my anxiety and how it affects me in and after class, what next?

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Learning From Life: Using the Case Study in the Classroom

Claire I. Donahue

How can the use of a case study become an effective learning strategy in the classroom? Is it possible to teach students difficult concepts using this method? These are the questions I asked myself when presented with the challenge of teaching a complicated psychiatric disorder to nursing students at Bunker Hill Community College.

In nursing education, the case study method involves the presenting of a real-life case scenario obtained from the instructor's professional experience. Because of the teacher's passion and first-hand knowledge of the case, this technique generally proves to be anything but boring. In my own teaching, I have found that case learning not only generates an enthusiasm that is contagious in the classroom but also can become a dynamic tool for fostering critical thinking.

Schizophrenia is a psychiatric disorder which is very difficult to teach because many of its signs and symptoms are abstract. My greatest challenge consists of finding ways to present students with certain facts about the illness, including types, phases, signs and symptoms, behaviors, theories, and forms of therapy, without overloading them. My goal is for students to become fascinated with learning more about this illness in the classroom and to eventually feel comfortable interacting in a clinical setting with a person who has schizophrenia.

Ultimately, the desired outcome is for our graduates to be able to perform appropriate nursing interventions reinforced with empathy and compassion when dealing with schizophrenic clients.

The Case

The actual case study I use includes a description of a client I worked with as part of my clinical experience while completing the requirements for a Master's Degree in Psychiatric Nursing at Boston College. The client was a

53-year-old single woman of Irish heritage, living in an inner-city apartment with her mother, who was 77 years old and widowed. The client herself was 5 feet, 4 inches tall, weighed 120 pounds and, at the time I met her, was withdrawn and apathetic. In addition to her schizophrenia, she had also been diagnosed with advanced cancer. She showed no concern about her hygiene and was unable to experience any pleasure in life or convey any emotion through her facial expression. Due to her diagnosis of schizophrenia, she had been out of touch with reality since adolescence. She heard disturbing voices, and her thoughts were disorganized and suspicious.

I conducted weekly psychotherapy sessions with my client and her mother at their home. These weekly visits became the groundwork for a case study which eventually served as my thesis. Following each psychotherapy session, I completed three separate tasks:

- I wrote a journal entry describing the content of the interaction between myself, the client, and her mother. The description included elements of critical thinking, how the family's behavior affected me, and what I learned from the visit.
- Using a nursing rating scale which measured the symptoms and behaviors of psychiatric clients, I measured my client's symptoms and behaviors.
- A list of specific nursing interventions was assessed weekly to determine which ones were helpful in treating clients with this type of disorder.

Preparation

One week before introducing the topic of schizophrenia to the class, I asked the students to take home a study guide packet including a factual description of the disease, treatment of the disorder, a matching activity which lists schizophrenic behaviors, and a fictitious case study with critical thinking questions. The packet also lists selected required readings from the course textbook. This assignment, including the study guide packet and readings, needs to be completed prior to class. At the beginning of class, difficult concepts are clarified using overhead projections. Medications are discussed, and further explanations are given. Students then divide into groups to compare their answers to the critical thinking questions related to the case study. Debate among the students is encouraged at this time, and the groups summarize their discussions for the rest of the class.

Following the group presentations, I distribute a one-minute feedback paper to informally assess how well students have grasped the concepts and information presented in the home study packet and clarified in class. For a limited time (two or three minutes), students respond in writing to the questions: "What was the most important thing you learned during today's class?" and "What important questions remain unanswered?" Then, during a break in the class period, I quickly review the papers. Upon the students' return, I read each of their statements and questions aloud and provide comments and explanations as needed. At this point, students usually have a fair understanding of the subject matter and feel ready to embark on a vicarious "journey" where they will meet a schizophrenic client with the goal of applying the information they have learned so far.

Presentation

In the classroom, I introduce the case study by describing the client and her social history, diagnosis, and relevant data concerning her diagnosis of schizophrenia. Goals and objectives of the interactions among the client, her mother, and myself are also included in the introduction. Students are asked to write down the following critical thinking questions and to reflect upon them during the presentation, with the goal of having further discussion afterwards.

- What are some of the feelings a nurse may have when working with a client who has schizophrenia?
- Which nursing interventions were most helpful in fostering a therapeutic relationship with the client and her mother?
- Which of the behaviors in the matching exercise in your study guide apply to this client?
- What are the side effects and nursing implications of the medications the client is taking?
- What are the common themes in the interactions among the client, her mother, and myself?

Excerpts from the case study are presented, giving the listener an inside view of the interactions which took place among the client, her mother, and the psychiatric nurse, making it easy for students to visualize common themes emerging from the home visits. The client's behaviors begin to give the students a better view of schizophrenia, and the process of applying their knowledge of medication to a psychiatric illness becomes simplified.

During the presentation, I read several of my journal entries to the students to emphasize the various feelings a nurse may experience when dealing with a client with this type of disorder and her family. The greatest task for the students as they listen to the readings is to envision themselves as nurses in this situation. Students experience many emotions at this time, as reflected in their facial expressions, posture, and attentiveness. They begin to have a clearer understanding of which nursing methods have been most useful when working with a dying schizophrenic client and her mother.

The case study comes to a close at the moment of the client's death.

Assessment of Student Learning

Following the presentation, a discussion evolves around the critical thinking questions which the students have been reflecting upon as they listened. Again, the one-minute feedback is distributed and each student responds in writing. The following written statements (reprinted with the authors' permission) represent my students' comments during a recent presentation of this case study.

- *I really found this lecture very interesting. I understand more clearly how to react to someone with this disorder.*
- *Consistency is very important. Perseverance really pays off.*
- *The case study was interesting because it actually presented a "real" person suffering with this disorder. It was helpful to see an honest ending, not a story-book ending.*
- *How did you deal with your feelings? How did you feel when the client actually reached out and held your hand?*
- *I learned how to apply all these terms about schizophrenia... I learned how to talk to a schizophrenic client.*
- *It was definitely helpful to learn about schizophrenia and how frustrating and sad it can be to work with someone diagnosed with it.*
- *Your story personalized the schizophrenic client and gave the means for a nurse to establish trust. It also showed the devastation schizophrenia could have on a family.*

Reflection

The case study described above has been an invaluable tool for initiating a process of active learning in my classroom. Students really appear to enjoy an actual case study, rather than a fictitious scenario authored by someone

they do not know or have access to. The one-minute feedback technique serves to evaluate student learning facilitated through the case study method. Through written, anonymous feedback, students express a clearer understanding of the schizophrenic client and how to interact with a person afflicted with this disorder. As students become witnesses to the interaction between the nurse and the client, they are better able to relate feelings of empathy and compassion toward the client and begin to readily identify the indispensible traits of caring, genuineness, and consistency in an effective nurse. During this presentation, students are exposed to the use of specific nursing interventions used in working with clients with severe psychiatric disorders.

Hopefully, this exposure will assist the students in trying these interventions with their clients in the clinical setting. From the class's feedback, it is clear that the value of role-modeling is understood and accepted as a way of clearly exhibiting the connection between nurse and client. The student perceives the teacher's energy and envisions what it must be like to work with a client suffering from this type of disorder and, further, wonders what it must be like to actually be the client.

In conclusion, the use of the case study as a learning tool is an enjoyable and gratifying method for teachers and students alike. Case study learning helps students relate to difficult concepts, stimulates critical thinking, and enhances the learning experience in general. Instructors in various specialties might consider the use of personal, non-fictitious case studies in their classrooms. Regardless of the discipline, students will appreciate and learn from the teacher's professional experience. The case study approach will foster a better alliance between teacher and students and promote increased understanding of a complex topic.

The Case for Classroom Technology

Adele A. Hamblett and Irene A. Sancinito

Why would anyone want or need to use the computer as a classroom aid? Considering the proliferation of computer technology and computer-related activities on college campuses in recent years, the answers would seem obvious. Young adults are computer savvy. Using e-mail, the Internet, and computers in general is as natural to them as using the telephone is to us baby boomers.

Today's college students have been raised in a world filled with visual stimulation — they are the *Sesame Street* generation, bored with old techniques and filled with the need to be constantly stimulated. The days of blackboard and chalk are giving way to "smart" boards and *PowerPoint* presentations as well as graphing software programs such as *Math Lab ToolBook*, *Function Investigator* and *Function Engine*. In light of these extraordinary developments, it has become clear that teachers who want to reach their students will find a way to incorporate technology in their classrooms.

As always, our students' passion for learning is something we can nurture through our enthusiasm for teaching our particular subject matter, but now we are required to break new ground. Having experimented with a variety of techniques and approaches to instruction in mathematics over the years, we have realized over the past few semesters that computer-based technology holds a major key. However, using this technology in the classroom to maximum advantage requires a great deal of practice, a willingness to learn and make mistakes, and a great attitude.

As instructors, we are constantly trying to improve our techniques to help students learn. Sometimes this requires our learning new software and technology as well as changing old techniques. When we are intimidated by

something, we tend to minimize its usefulness and dismiss or avoid what we fear. To keep up with our students' changing needs, it is important for many of us to break the intimidation barrier and overcome our phobia with regard to technology. Opening our minds to new possibilities in our classrooms requires that we avoid being content with ourselves and with how we have always presented material to our students. As colleagues, we need to be open to discussion and assessment and have mutual respect and trust, as together we learn new teaching techniques.

As recipients of Title III funding in the fall of 1998, the two of us, along with our colleagues Joanne Manville and Judy Tully, worked on revitalizing our developmental mathematics and college algebra courses. Joanne Manville, our mentor, directed us through various software packages and the use of "smart" classroom technology to assist in visualization and contextualization of important concepts. The feeling that we were in this together helped us overcome our own fear and intimidation. As we struggled to learn the new equipment and adapt the software to our purposes, we helped each other reach a certain comfort level. During this development phase, we met on campus for two 75-minute blocks each week and probably three times that amount was spent at home "playing" with the software.

With practice, and as we became more and more adept and comfortable with the technology, we experienced an increase in the level of our students' enthusiasm and achievement. From the outset, we were able to take pieces of what we learned immediately into the classroom to "try it out." Judging from our students' grasp of graphing concepts, as measured by their improved quiz grades, the results were outstanding. As teachers, we could sense the increase in general excitement and enthusiasm for the technology being used in the classroom.

We were anxious to incorporate more, but there were drawbacks. At the time, there was only one fully equipped classroom available, and one portable "smart" cart, which had to be checked out, brought to class, set up and returned (all time-consuming). There were four of us (as well as faculty from other departments) all vying for the same equipment, but we were not discouraged. Even before the addition of new "smart" classrooms and the increased availability of mobile projection equipment, we managed to overcome these inconveniences, and our enthusiasm for using the technology was not diminished.

We attended *PowerPoint* and other multimedia workshops with the enthusiastic support of Nancy Myers and Jean Bernard. As our course revitalization projects reached completion, we found we needed two semesters to totally incorporate what we learned into our classroom presentations and also to reach a level of comfort using the computer and projection equipment with the *Smart Board* (Smart Technologies, Inc.).

Each of us had two classes outside the stationary smart classroom, where we did not have the luxury of the *Smart Board*, with which we could use touch-screen properties to demonstrate mathematical principles in a graphical way. In those classes, we were only able to use a laptop and projector. As one of our students in these classes commented, "I am looking forward to learning in the 'smart' room; we should make all math classrooms 'smart' rooms." Clearly, the *Smart Board* is a marvelous asset, and we are looking forward to having more fully equipped smart classrooms as more faculty become aware of the advantages of incorporating this technology in their teaching.

By the fall semester of 1999, we felt that the use of technology in our classrooms was making a real difference in not only how students were learning, but also in what they were retaining. For example, in order to graph the point (3,4) on a coordinate plane, you would first move three units horizontally to the right from the origin, then move four units up vertically to mark the point (3,4). There were always students who would first move three units horizontally along the x axis, mark the point, and then begin over again from the origin, moving four units up on the y axis marking another point. Instead of one point, they ended up graphing two. After presenting graphing points using the new software, not a single student made this mistake. We strongly felt that this new mode of presentation was making a difference with our students, but now did the students feel? To verify our speculations, we decided to survey our students at the end of the fall 1999 semester.

The Technology in the Classroom Survey (p. 90) includes the student responses from our combined Fundamentals of Algebra and College Algebra classes. The scale for questions 1-3 was: a=1 – e=5, with the average response underlined. Responses to questions 4-6 were both positive and encouraging, as shown by the following samples.

Question 4: What did you like best?

- *The use of the technology helps me focus more and pay more attention in class.*
- *The technology gave me a better understanding of the graphing.*
- *The technology made it more fun to learn.*
- *I like the whole concept of the "smart" board.*
- *The graphing technology was mind-boggling. The ability to see the physical representation of parabolas and hyperbolas, etc. really did it justice.*
- *It was great to see equations or explanations or definitions, etc. popping up quickly instead of having to wait for the teacher to write it all out.*

Question 5: What did you like least?

- *.. the computer breaking down sometimes.*
- *.. nothing.*
- *.. that there is only one Smart Board.*
- *.. getting the board oriented and the different programs running took longer than I would have liked sometimes.*

Additional Comments

- *Technology in the classroom is great. By having the chance to use it in my classroom, my math knowledge has improved.*
- *Use of computer technology in the classroom really is a good idea today, as many students like to work on computer.*
- *I would like to have smart boards present in the Science Department.*
- *Let the students physically use the technology more.*

Using computer and *Smart Board* technology has been a truly exhilarating experience. Not only has it impacted our classroom environment, but also our students and the way we as educators have been revitalized. The students seem to be more "tuned in" to the classroom. Since the majority of all learners tend to be visual learners, the more graphic we can make our presentations, the better. Learning appears to have improved significantly by involving students in their learning process and by making that process more relevant to the ways they interact with each other and their world.

Technology in the Classroom Survey

1. How well did the use of technology in the classroom increase your understanding of the mathematical concepts

	RESPONSES	TOTAL POINTS
a. not at all	3	3
b. very little	5	10
c. somewhat	27	81
d. quite a bit	37	148
e. very much	25	125

AVERAGE

367/97=3.78

2. What overall effect did the use of technology have on your attention — how well did you pay attention during class?

	RESPONSES	TOTAL POINTS
a. not at all	1	1
b. very little	3	6
c. somewhat	15 *(one abstained)*	45
d. quite a bit	34	136
e. very much	43	215

AVERAGE

403/96=4.20

3. What overall effect did the use of technology have on your enjoyment of the material presented?

	RESPONSES	TOTAL POINTS
a. not at all	1	1
b. very little	4	8
c. somewhat	22	66
d. quite a bit	30	120
e. very much	40	200

AVERAGE

395/97=4.07

4. What did you like best?
5. What did you like least?
6. What suggestions do you have for improving your classroom learning?

Teaming Up: Faculty, Library, and Student Collaboration

Diane M. Smith

The collaborative activities discussed in this article focus on establishing and cultivating content course-related learning experiences for students that reach across the curriculum while contributing to the professional development of librarians and faculty members in a diverse, urban community college setting. These activities infuse constructive energy and vitality into the teaching and learning experience by affording students opportunities to contribute to the knowledge base of the course.

Considering Collaboration

Typically, collaboration of this type involves two educators who have voluntarily decided to work together to devise and deliver one or more course-based activities for students. One is a librarian and the other is a faculty member from any discipline working with students involved in a certificate or degree program. Together, they are able to invite students into the collaborative process to make teaching and learning interesting, fresh, challenging, and relevant to the world outside the classroom.

Librarians and faculty members jointly design activities and integrate them into regular graded coursework for the purpose of motivating students to demonstrate what they know while acquiring new skills and methods. The librarian delivers the instruction as a related but detached participant in the delivery of course content, thereby supporting what the faculty member is doing in the course while drawing students along an alternate avenue outside the classroom to enhance and increase learning.

For the purpose of this article, the traditional library is used along with the virtual library as an information bank for resource-based learning activities. Optional settings such as museums, tutoring centers, learning labs and community service projects can also be used as avenues for resource-based learning. In addition to a proper setting, the idea of integrating the World

Wide Web into the learning sequence is also essential to the success of this type of activity. As tools for learning, the Internet and the WWW provide educators and learners with a common platform that aids communication, eases access to information, and allows for addressing the needs of different learning styles in the process (BHCC Library Instruction 2000).

Collaboration using Internet resources results in leveling the field where teaching and learning takes place. It positions library instructors, who are information specialists, on an equal footing with faculty members, who are subject matter experts. In general terms, the library instructors represent any resource specialists who are educators and instructional designers experienced in the application of information literacy and critical thinking exercises for assignments across the curriculum.

Resource-based teaching affords learners the opportunity to be active participants in constructing knowledge bases that can be used to enhance course content. The classroom walls fall away to encourage the incorporation of physical and electronic information resources. Course projects are devised that provide students with experience in the areas of independent research, critical thinking, problem solving and other practices designed to encourage independent learning.

Information literacy activities, which include a range of options and channels (media, cultural, computer, for example) are process-oriented to connect course content to the experiences of information processing and critical thinking skills. As Harrington asserts, "Instruction must be presented at the time of need...information literacy concepts should be built into the system so users can select and evaluate information independently" (383-84). Out of context, information literacy and critical thinking skills lack a useful platform, diminishing their impact and value in terms of student learning. Applied to meaningful content, however, information literacy gives the student essential tools for problem solving while using and creating knowledge. "If faculty see information skills as relevant to their goals, they may be motivated to make the time to learn. Librarians should probably be more active in pointing out that learning information skills can save faculty time and effort and increase independence and confidence in doing research" (Miller 37).

Combining expertise promotes integrating a range of changing (particularly those related to technological advances) resources to specific course content and addresses the disparate needs of diverse student

populations. Collaboration, however, is rarely easy or simple. Consider, for example, issues related to structure and control. Parameters and guidelines are essential to both students and teacher in the classroom. To prepare, measure, and weigh the content of a 15-week course in higher education, criteria must be in place to ensure manageability and document the academic merit of the course content.

What happens when one introduces things as unwieldy, unpredictable, and uncontrollable as the Internet and the World Wide Web into the classroom? There is a great temptation to limit students to pre-selected and reviewed sites previously identified as suited to the identified course agenda and goals. But does such an approach truly encourage and develop the students' critical thinking skills, build the confidence necessary in an independent adult learner to seek and discriminate among the barrage of information at everyone's fingertips today or motivate those students to stretch themselves beyond the standardized checklists? Experience working closely with students and educators has demonstrated to this author that it does not.

Internet access presents a learning community with an opportunity to connect the often too predictable and sterile academic exercises with the world outside the classroom in meaningful ways. The instructor no longer needs to simulate the chaos and unpredictability of the "real" world in the classroom to prepare students for the messy challenges of actual life situations. Resource-based learning that employs the Internet can help to build that aspect into the learning dynamic in constructive and manageable ways. The most reasonable, responsible approach to the challenges created by the new technologies is to integrate information literacy education into coursework so that the doors and windows remain open to students in ways that enable them to access information and new knowledge as it evolves.

Why, though, should we opt for the often time consuming and usually uncomfortable avenue of collaboration to integrate information literacy activities? First, consider the fact that students who are free to explore resources beyond those listed on the course syllabus often find themselves actively and positively engaged in the learning process while acknowledging and introducing new and sometimes valuable knowledge to the course resource package. As for course instructors, many often find themselves gaining confidence in information handling while working with a librarian. Together, they attempt to measure and articulate the pros and cons of new sources in terms of the value the information has in relation to course goals

and the specific discipline. Finally, consider the librarian on the front line, where assessment of the purchased resources is immediate and often more accurate than monitoring detached usage statistics from the back room. In keeping with some of the best practices of classroom action research, both the library and course instructors are challenged and stimulated to incorporate their field learning experiences into the immediate teaching and learning activity (Oja and Smulyan).

Aside from the fact that the "Information Age" is upon us and digital technology is changing access, retrieval, use and generation of data, there are human factors to consider. Generally speaking, collaborative teaching experiences sometimes give rise to faculty concerns related to limited instruction time for meeting course objectives, and some fear a loss of autonomy or conflicts related to academic freedom. The library, like many other campus resource centers, is central to the academic mission of a college. It can provide a unique platform for addressing and working through the pros and cons of issues related to collaborative activities, using online resources and technology in the classroom, and using multimedia as part of a complete range of learning activities. Single-assignment collaboration experiences like the ones discussed below often bring faculty, students and librarians together on task, providing opportunities to investigate and address these and related issues in non-threatening ways.

A Closer Look at Collaboration at Bunker Hill Community College

The BHCC library and its Web page offer the opportunity both for the learning experience to occur and for follow-up to take place. Files posted on the library Web page make useful learning tools for ongoing projects and contribute to a foundation upon which future student sessions can be built, thus leaving a trail of accomplishment. The library itself is a constant that is in place from course after course, semester after semester. It allows for the organic integration of an assessment process that can contribute to the measurement of resources being used and to the evaluation of related learning activities during and after their delivery.

During the spring 2000 semester, students from a wide range of degree and certificate programs offered by BHCC joined their course and library instructors to work on assignments designed to develop their knowledge in terms of course content while strengthening their critical thinking, information literacy, and independent learning skills. Beginning nursing

students struggled with and learned about the range of discipline-specific source material available to them on campus by working their way through assignments designed to get them involved with those sources. Librarians and course instructors joined these students in their efforts to learning how to work with each other while they sought and found answers to questions that at first seemed beyond their abilities. In a learning activity for higher level nursing students, the team worked together to help the students distinguish between a magazine and a journal. They put to use the details they had learned in other classes about how to cite facts taken from an electronic database and statistics taken from library reference books as they worked to put the finishing touches on their medical research papers.

Later in the semester, other students who were enrolled in an accelerated biomedical career program worked eagerly to meet the criteria of assignments developed by a faculty member and a librarian. Those students found themselves using newspapers, magazines, people, journals, books, CD ROM programs, and the WWW to access and retrieve information that would serve as a basis for their own assessment of the rapid change and development going on in their chosen career field.

Business management students struggled for weeks coming and going from the library to find answers to their unique, but similar problem-based assignments, only to discover that the path to their answers could be found by working more closely with their course and library instructors. The key to learning how to help themselves to bring meaning to raw data and general theories for the purpose of doing some original thinking on their topics was in learning how to collaborate with other students and the instructors, all of whom were working with the same course content. As interaction increased, so did learning. Students made progress on their assignments, understanding better and contributing their own ideas with more confidence and enthusiasm as they talked, read, and wrote. It was clear from participant feedback that everyone involved learned more from the highs and lows of the experience than ever could have been communicated through class lecture or textbook content reviews alone.

Another example of how the information literacy component reaches across the curriculum at BHCC was seen last semester as the honor students worked at completing their research projects. The students agreed to use the BHCC library as a preliminary, if not the primary, base for their research. They selected topics of interest and presented them to their course instructor

for approval. There was no way to prepare ahead of time for the creative, imaginative and far-reaching paths the students would embark upon. Interlibrary loan, electronic databases, the WWW and visits to area specialty libraries would all be part of their learning how to help themselves to information. The honors students set about their search for material while generally and informally keeping in contact with the course and library instructors throughout the process. A *pathfinder* (research guide) was established on the BHCC Library Web Page, one for each student in th program. The students used the pathfinder throughout the semester to post initial statements of their topics, what they considered to be their most significant project starting questions and resources, their midterm progress reports and finally their concluding statements and bibliographies. The pathfinder, available on the WWW, could be used as an outline by students needing to get started on their own search for what there is to know about the honor student's stated topic. The honors students attended weekly class sessions throughout the semester, benefited from the insights and observations of guest speakers, and participated in several library sessions. The pathfinder served as a steadying influence throughout the semester by helping students return to their focus, recognize when and why they deviated and make concrete their attempts to readjust themselves as they proceeded.

Reviews of the learning activity among its participants varied but were always interesting and often proved useful for the participants and the instructors. Some students found the pathfinder helpful; others found it did nothing to enhance their creativity on the project; a few were eager and proud to display their work while others drew careful lines between their public acknowledgements and their personal opinions before posting their work. The course instructor found it to be a useful tool and the library instructor found it helpful as a means to establish and cultivate continuous learning exchanges with students that otherwise might have hesitated to return to or get involved with the college library. All agreed that the technique for teaching and learning should be applied again and explored further in the next honors seminar.

Opportunities to work throughout a semester with a consistent and focused group of students like those in the honors program are rare. Single and double sessions are more the norm. Adding to the challenges inherent in the more transitory sessions is the fact that many of the law, economics, government and media students who came to the library related instruction

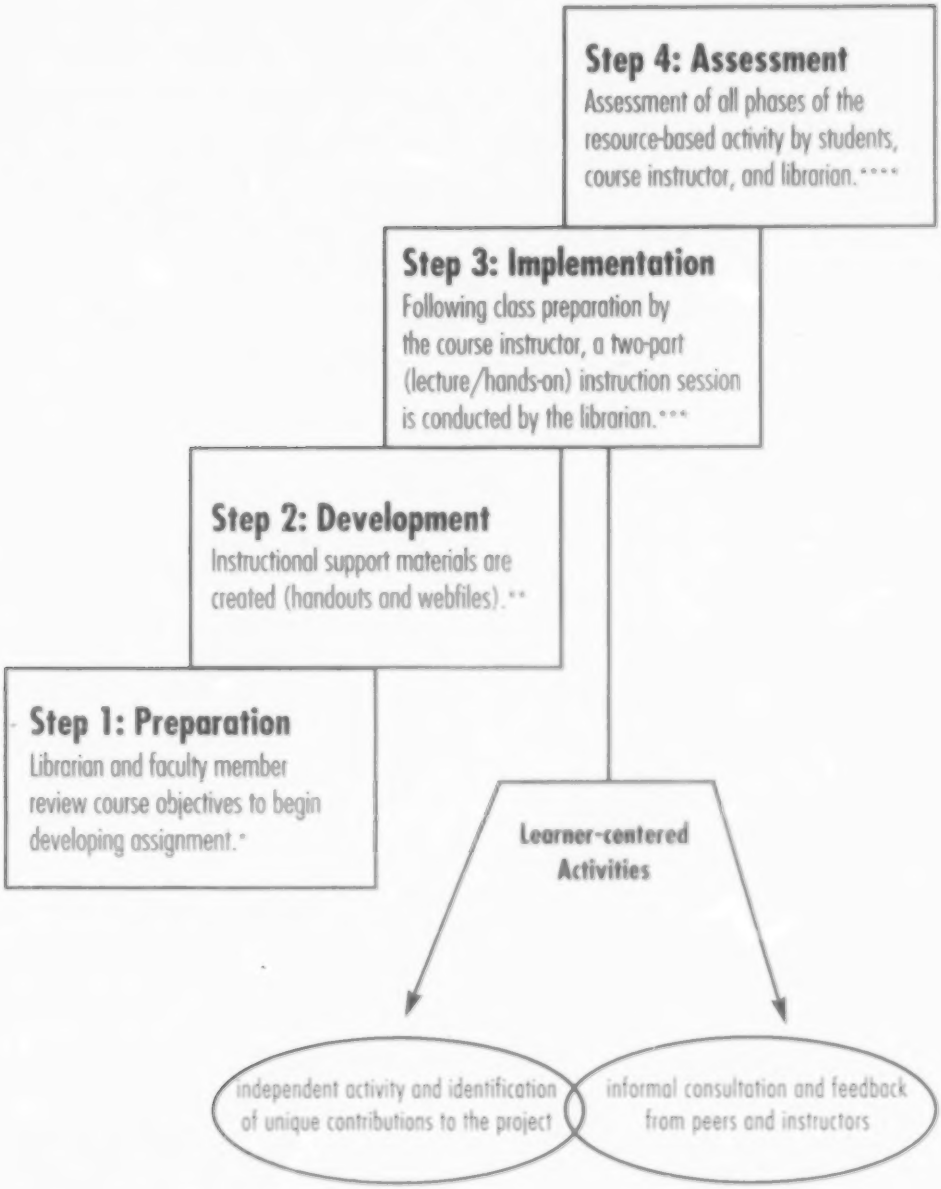
sessions began by saying that they already knew how to use the library, the computer, and the WWW. Even most of those students left satisfied and grateful with completed assignments in hand, an increased level of confidence when using information tools and resources, and a new appreciation for all that can not be seen and known when working in isolation. Reading and summarizing newspaper articles in their new language was somehow less overwhelming and burdensome when the ESL students could access and retrieve related articles in their native language as part of the process. World newspapers that related the issue assigned by their instructors to their native country concerns made it easier and more interesting for those students to investigate and exchange ideas with the ESL and library instructors.

Collaboration in Practice

The instruction files posted to the Bunker Hill Community College Library Web Page are the physical expression of the resource-based information literacy initiative on the BHCC campus (Bunker Hill Community College Library Instruction Page 2000). Full time and adjunct faculty members are invited to collaborate with a librarian on course-related activities that employ the goals and objectives of information literacy while contributing to the established course goals. The activity is purposely and deliberately designed to relate to course content so that the one or two class sessions spent in the library will not detract from the course instructor's class time.

The chart on page 98 details the four-step process of a faculty-library-student collaboration model. Given the realities of large class sizes, time constraints, and differences in students' entry level skills (information, media, computer and critical literacies), it is important to note that the model is meant as a guide, not a rigid formula. The steps of the model do not constitute a checklist but instead offer a foundation from which to mold the teaching and learning realities of different situations as they present themselves. In general, the flow begins from an awareness of the students' need to be informed, educated, and practiced in a specific area of knowledge. The faculty member brings the tools of course objectives and goals as dictated by the requirements of the discipline. The librarian acts as an information specialist and a subject generalist providing learning methods and strategies to build a bridge that connects the students with appropriate resources in meaningful ways. By integrating the goals and objectives of information

Developing a Resource-Based Activity


Step 4: Assessment
Assessment of all phases of the resource-based activity by students, course instructor, and librarian.****
Step 3: Implementation
Following class preparation by the course instructor, a two-part (lecture/hands-on) instruction session is conducted by the librarian.***
Step 2: Development
Instructional support materials are created (handouts and webfiles).**
Step 1: Preparation
Librarian and faculty member review course objectives to begin developing assignment.*
Learner-centered Activities
independent activity and identification of unique contributions to the project
informal consultation and feedback from peers and instructors

* a resource-based graded assignment which is featured in the syllabus

** designed to address different learning styles and encourage independent student activity

*** Before attending the session, the course instructor presents an overview of the goals of the assignment and its significance in relation to the course.

**** Assessment (both formative and summative) is organic, and should happen throughout the four- step model; however, the process culminates in the final step for reporting purposes.

literacy into the teaching/learning process, the student not only learns course content material but also acquires transferable skills that will prove useful as he/she progresses through school and life using information effectively and efficiently.

Ideally, sessions takes place in two ninety-minute long segments, which include a projection of the library instructor's discussion and demonstration, the presence and participation of the course instructor, and the assistance of a student assigned as a rover, with one student per computer. It is interesting to note, however, that two students sharing individual workstations works as well for different reasons. "In short, although culture, family and educational background account for some variations, college and university teachers can count on most entering students having a pretty well-developed ability to share their toys" (Bruffee 16). In an average class of 25 students, for example, those experienced with navigating the WWW are asked to sit with those less experienced. The team approach often proves more effective than individuals, who often possess varying levels of computer skill competency, trying to follow the screen projected discussion or demonstration on their own. The student is then expected to spend out-of-class time on the assignment, working alone or in a study group, the same as would be expected for other college course work.

What to Expect from the Collaborative Experience

Participating in collaborative activities often leads to new ideas and the confidence to try them out. It also encourages participants to recognize their existing abilities and accomplishments in new ways. The two educators can and should seek recognition and rewards in their own fields, since it is beneficial for them as well as the campus to be involved in these activities, but recognition and reward also can and should come from the administrative level on campus (Bohen & Stiles). The structure and conduit of this recognition often exists as part of the foundation for the two parties to work together in the first place. "Because the academic enterprise is organized into departments for funding and governance purposes, administrative structures have emerged that further support and often cement these narrow ways of interacting and hinder the pursuit of cross-disciplinary work" (Bohen & Stiles 43). The structure also lays the basis upon which the complementary roles of the participants are recognized. If both are given equal recognition and compensation, then both are recognized as equal co-contributors to the project and/or learning activity.

The BHCC campus has a mini-grant program in place as well as a journal to encourage educators to put their accomplishments in print for others to recognize and apply to their own experience. General grant money for education projects is sometimes available, and travel and expense money for professional group activities where they can exchange accomplishments with peers in their fields. The BHCC Office of Grants and Contracts exists to help locate and deliver grant opportunities for institutionally supported activities.

Most of the work at BHCC to date relative to incorporating information literacy initiatives across the curriculum has been carried out as part of regular teaching activities. Targeting appropriate grant support, however, is in the planning stages to ensure that a more formalized structure is established and modest financial incentives for participation are made possible to further support the work in meaningful ways. Grant support would make participation in regional and national information literacy programs possible, thus ensuring the institution keeps pace with movements in higher education to make information literacy as a basic part of student skills and competency objectives and guidelines (Bohen & Stiles).

Conclusion

Results brought about through collaboration are more creative, constructive, productive and interesting than those produced by less interactive endeavors. Of course, this depends on the individuals involved and the degree to which they commit themselves to the project, but since those are elements within the control of the individuals, results are usually exponentially better than similar solo attempts at the same type of thing (Hutchens). The librarian is at home with the resources and the environment where delivery takes place. The faculty member is at the threshold of the latest and the best in the field of study. The students are new to the material, curious and, for the most part, eager and willing to learn.

Even more important is embracing the opportunity to work across the lines of traditional disciplines. In the collaborative exercise, all parties are provided with an opportunity to break down the walls between faculty, students, and librarians. Many students might be under the impression that libraries are for grade school kids and that they can get everything they need from their computers at home. Some librarians believe that library skills should be taught the way libraries use them while faculty are often more interested in more immediate and practical methods of information seeking

and application (Dennis & Harrington). The experience of collaboration encourages all to appreciate and address those concerns while moving forward in the active process of teaching and learning. "The capacity for team teaching to improve instruction appears to derive from the opportunities for interaction provided by collaboration in teaching through which colleagues come to trust one another, observe each other teach, and discuss their ideas and concerns about teaching" (Paulsen & Feldman 122).

It is also beneficial for the resource provider and the faculty member to get involved with a collaborative experience because it acts as a built-in motivator for busy and often over-burdened community college faculty. "If faculty see information skills as relevant to their goals, they may be motivated to take the time to learn. Librarians should probably be more active in pointing out that learning information skills can save faculty time and effort and increase independence and confidence in doing research" (Miller 37). Pressed by the demands of a needy student population and formidable workloads, opportunities for our own learning can sometimes get lost. Educators learn a lot of what we learn from other educators while they strive and struggle to with new methods of teaching in a common environment. "Teachers learn best when they are involved as active participants in the professional development experience" (Hutchins 38). It is a formidable task to stay current in our own fields and also with the changes and challenges technology presents to educators and field practitioners." Recent developments in a variety of areas — action science, reflective practice, adult learning theory, and the like — have encouraged an expanded range of strategies for improving instruction" (Paulsen & Feldman 122). Collaborative single assignment activities act as a means to address what we need while delivering what our students need.

Another function of the collaborative experience is its value as an assessment tool. Librarians and other resource providers are only doing half the job when they purchase and position electronic databases and other resource materials. Advertising availability and positioning new materials through organization and accessibility is most useful if librarians also participate in the activity of providing a means of educating their audience to those resources in meaningful ways. Faculty members benefit from opening the doors of their classrooms. It provides them the means to stand back and observe the results of teaching the course as a whole while their students apply and develop some of what they have learned in the classroom. Students

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will often raise questions and offer observations in the atmosphere of a task-based experience that would not have otherwise been considered within the confines of a more traditional and structured setting.

Finally, consider the collaborative work among educators and students as an opportunity to model a skill that is essential to success in the workplace. Examples of competition are more readily found and easier to learn than examples of collaboration. The individual remains paramount in our society and the competitive spirit reigns. Theories of human and social development, however, stress the importance of imparting the concepts of teamwork and knowledge sharing in attempts to construct cooperative world views. Getting along and working well with others are among the most important things we teach and practice at a community college, and collaborative learning experiences give educators a chance to participate in "do as I do" exercises with colleagues and students.

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Thinking About Reading Through Writing

Carole Center

In an article in the July, 1999 issue of College English, Ann Berthoff writes that "teaching writing as a way of learning to read and reading closely as a model for careful writing...should be the chief mission of any and all English departments" (680). If we accept this premise, then we want to use reading to enhance writing in a writing course and use writing to enhance reading in a reading or literature course (as well as to use reading and writing in courses outside the English department). Reading and writing reinforce each other as interconnected forms of composing. In the community college, as well as in other college settings, students enhance both their reading and writing when they write short, often one sentence, responses to what they have read. Talking about reading is another way for students to compose their responses to a reading. I have found that when students write short responses before class discussion, they are more prepared and more willing to participate in the class talk.

We use reading and writing with the aim of helping our students develop their "active minds" (in Bertoff's phrase) as active readers, as writers who rethink as they revise, and as critical thinkers. Readers, writers, and thinkers are active when they put their thoughts about what they read into language. Active readers ask questions about the text before, during, and after reading (Keene and Zimmerman 106), looking for answers in the text itself, in their own experience, and in other texts they have read (119). Anthony Petrosky says that reading comprehension "is more an act of composition — for understanding is composing — than of information retrieval" (19). Readers can compose a reading by, in the familiar phrase, composing their thoughts, but they need to externalize these thoughts, to make them public in spoken or written language, in order to see what they think and to extend their responses by comparing them to the responses of

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other readers. As Petrosky puts it, "Comprehension, like composition, means making public what is private — a process dependent on explication, illustration, and critical examination of perceptions and ideas" (20) as readers think, question, and then "speak [their] minds about what [they] have read" (Petrosky 21).

At Bunker Hill Community College, where students arrive with a wide range of academic skill levels and life experiences, reading problems can all too often be ascribed to the reality that students simply cannot find the time between classes to do the assignment, or they do the reading without understanding what they have read. It is possible to read without thinking, questioning, and preparing to speak our minds, and all readers do this at times. Less experienced readers are more likely than experienced readers to look at every word of the text, as Richard Rodriguez describes it (634), without actually reading and understanding. Like the students, a teacher in Randy Bomer's "Time for Meaning" describes as "lying back, waiting for meaning to come and get them or hoping the book would wash over them" (92), BHCC students may turn the pages of the reading and look at every word without grasping any meaning of the text that they can put into words. This approach to reading won't work because we don't know anything "purely, objectively, immediately; what we know is [always] bound up with how we use language" (Dowst 73). We can help students read actively by having them use language as a means of knowing what they think, assuring them that they have "to think as they read by having them speak their thoughts to a listener [or listeners]" (Bomer 93). Because of this demand, they will formulate a response to the reading, which they can express in speech or writing. Then, to paraphrase Auden's famous "how can I know what I think until I see what I say" (qtd. in Berthoff, *Forming/Thinking/Writing* 22), they will see what their response to the reading is in what they say. One of my student interviewees, for a study on class discussion I did last year at another college, describes the process well when she says: "Sometimes I say things I didn't expect to say. And then I might just wonder, oh, I wonder where that came from. It helps me sometimes, I mean 'cuz (like) certain things you are thinking in your head, unless you say it out, you don't remember it."

Most first year college students haven't yet developed the "cognitive agility" (Keene and Zimmerman 161) to formulate and sustain questions as they read and then to keep these questions alive to bring them into a class discussion. Therefore, when we assign writing exercises which help students think about

their questions and compose tentative answers, we are helping them become more active readers as well as better writers. The reading response process is a more powerful way for students to look at what they are thinking when they put their thoughts into writing, either as a preliminary to class discussion or an alternative to discussion.

But what is so great about writing? Both Bomer and Petrosky talk of "speaking our thoughts" about what we read, so why am I arguing that writing is an even more effective way to see what we think about what we read? Kenneth Dowst says that "while one in effect composes his or her world by engaging in any sort of language-using, it is by means of writing that one stands to learn the most, for writing is the form of language-using that is slowest, most deliberate, most accessible, most conveniently manipulable, and most permanent" (69). Because we can see what we think in the print on the page, writing about what we read results in "a product in a familiar and available medium for immediate, literal (that is, visual) rescanning and review" (Emig 11). In other words, once our thoughts are down on paper, we can play with them, connecting, supplementing, replacing, rearranging, abstracting, and generalizing (Dowst 69). Writing, "perhaps because there is a product involved, . . . tends to be a more responsible and committed act than talking" (Emig 9), and, as a result, "discussion after even brief writing is more deliberate and more fruitful" (Deen and Ponsot 91).

The speech we encourage in the classroom, especially in whole class discussion, can be an active arena of meaning-making. In this area, when "one student speaks and another responds, they are making meaning — for themselves, not for the teacher" (Glenn 101), but it doesn't work every day or for every student. At least it doesn't work the way I had expected it would. Before I started teaching freshman English, I was a trainer for child care and other human services workers. During the training sessions, I was used to throwing out a topic for discussion and having the trainees avidly respond because of their eagerness to share their experiences and ideas with others who understand the particular demands, frustrations, and rewards of their jobs. When I began teaching, I expected a similar response and, based on that expectation, I anticipated a progression from reading to talk (class discussion) to writing. I thought that I could throw out a question after everyone had done the reading, and that students would be eager to say what they thought. I did include a journal step (response log, writer's notebook) before the class discussion but conceived of this merely as a way for the

students to pull their thoughts together before class. It was in class discussion, as I had envisioned it, that students would do the real work, clarifying their thinking by articulating and comparing their readings.

However, instead of the active meaning-making arena I had hoped for, I experienced blank stares, nervous paper-shuffling, and one-word answers in response to my invitation to discuss the reading. "Did you like the reading?" I might ask. Having asked a closed question, I would get a "yes" or "no" response. "Why did (or didn't) you like it?" I would persist. Either I would get only nervous smiles in return, or one or two students would answer and then the discussion would trail off. Clearly, my questions could use some work. On the other hand, the more I read about the processes of reading and writing and about other teachers' experiences, the more I think that it is not my questions but the students' formulations of their own questions which will help them to move from reading to response.

This experience has motivated me to experiment with some short writing assignments to help students compose their questions and observations in writing so that they are representing their thoughts in language. In this way, the students will at least make their thoughts public by sharing their writing with other students and, ideally, by expressing their thoughts during the class discussion. These devices and exercises ask students to move from reading to formal essay (or paragraph) writing by writing in various ways about what they have read before sharing their readings with other students in talk. I am moving from my anticipated model of read, talk, write to a new model of read, write, talk, and write.

Cheryl Glenn, in her article, "The Reading-Writing Connection — What's Process Got to Do with it?", offers some starting points for short writing assignments that are structured both in terms of limitations on the amount of writing and in terms of focused prompts. Instead of stopping at having students write summaries of the reading, as many of us do, she asks students to move from a paragraph summarizing their reading to boiling that paragraph down to one sentence (102). An example of a one-sentence summary from a BHCC developmental reading student is this sentence describing Maxine Hong Kingston's "No Name Woman": "The main point of this story is that if you live in a village everybody knows your business and if they don't like what is happening, they will do something to you and your family and your family will disown you." Glenn describes her use of short writing assignments both as prompts for class discussion and as a means for

building on preliminary class discussion, asking students to write about ideas raised in discussion in order to deepen and extend the thinking before returning to the discussion.

To write a one-sentence summary of a reading may require a complicated sentence pattern. The same is true of the one- to two-sentence writing assignments suggested in William E. Coles, Jr.'s "Less is More: The Ten-Minute Writing Assignment as Enabling Constraint," which are similar to Glenn's assignments in their provision of form through restrictions, in this case restrictions of time and the amount to write. Coles asks students to write one, two, or at the most, three sentences in order to push the development of their reading, thinking, and writing skills "under the pressure of time and within the restriction of space" (303). These constraints, he believes, force students to develop their abilities to get "to the heart of things" in response to their reading and to "experiment with more complicated sentence patterns than they might use all on their own" (306). His questions for these short writing assignments generally ask students to explore the relationships among ideas; seeing and exploring relationships, as Ann Berthoff explains, is what we do when we think (*Forming/Thinking/Writing* 51). For example, he asks students to explain in a single sentence which of two ideas is more correct, useful, or important or to explain in no more than two sentences how two ideas which seem contradictory may be said to be in harmony, or vice versa (305). Coles tells students in his syllabus that they will have to master the grammatical skills needed to produce the complex sentences that these assignments demand: "You will certainly have to know how to set up a series or an opposition in a sentence, the difference between commas and semicolons, periods and dashes" (304).

Many community college students need more guidance than the restriction to one, two, or three sentences in order to contain within sentences the relationships between ideas that characterize critical thinking, reading, and writing. While the one- or two-sentence writing assignment at the beginning of the class will work well for them, they need some ideas about what kinds of sentences name the relationships they are seeing. When we get our thoughts together by getting our words together in sentence form (Berthoff, *Forming/Thinking/Writing* 86), experienced readers and writers will have the requisite linguistic forms readily at hand, but less experienced readers and writers will benefit from being given sentence patterns which express

various relationships. For example, they can respond to Coles's prompt about which idea is more useful if they are given a sentence pattern of "While one idea is _____, the other idea is more useful in _____." A helpful sentence pattern for his prompt about seeing harmony in contradictory ideas is "Although _____ seems different than _____, in fact, they are the same in that _____." For example, in teaching "Four Directions" from Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club, I might ask students to explain how the two seemingly contradictory ideas, such as the narrator's statement that her mother doesn't know anything and her subsequent realization that "my mother knew more tricks than I had thought" (449) can be brought together. I might do the same with two contradictory ideas, such as "daughters should obey their mothers" and "daughters should not obey their mothers if their mothers are being unjust," that might arise during preliminary discussion.

In *Forming/Thinking/Writing*, Berthoff offers students sentence patterns (seed sentences). For example, one of the sentence patterns relates one idea to another by using a semi-colon. Another pattern relates cause and effect using "If_____, then_____" clauses, and a third type of seed sentence begins with "because" (86). I have found that students in developmental reading courses need a seed sentence using a dependent clause to connect two closely related ideas before they use a semi-colon. Thus, when I asked them to make a connection from M. Scott Momaday's "The Way to Rainy Mountain" to their own experience, I had them first use this seed sentence: "When I read about _____ in this story, it reminded me of _____" before moving on to two independent clauses connected by a semi-colon. In response, one student wrote, "When Momaday tells us about his grandmother cooking on a wood stove, it reminds me of my own grandmother who used to cook on a wood stove just because she did not like modern things." When she used a semi-colon, this sentence became "Momaday tells us about his grandmother cooking on a wood stove; that reminds me of my own grandmother's old-fashioned stove." Another student offered a more elegant example: "In the story Momaday feels alone when he returns to his grandmother's house after she died; I remember that I felt the same way when my grandmother died." To help students write a sentence using the cause and effect relationship, I simply had them write, in response to Joan Didion's "Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream," a sentence using "because" that explains why the main character killed her husband. Some examples of their responses include "Lucille Miller killed her husband because she wanted his insurance money to build a better life," and "Lucille Miller was an

ambitious woman who killed her husband because she wanted the insurance money."

Another useful seed sentence, this one suggested by Louise Smith, gives students a sentence pattern to compare two similar ideas in a sentence that begins with "just as" followed by an independent clause beginning with "so." In my Reading 090 class at BHCC, students used this sentence pattern to discuss how the father in an excerpt from Omar Tyree's "A Single Mom" was similar to the father in Junot Diaz's "Fiesta, 1980." One response was "Just as in 'Fiesta' the sons were disrespectful to the father, so in 'Basketball' the son also was disrespectful to his father." The students even more successfully used Smith's suggested sentence for expressing differences: "While on the one hand _____, on the other hand _____." Using this sentence pattern to express how the two stories were different, students were remarkably able to pick out contrasts, as in this example:

> *While on the one hand J. D. worked hard to try to regain his son's love after not having a relationship with his own son when he was too young, on the other hand, Papi did not try to have a good relationship with his children and instead was abusive, did not have respect for his children, and did not show his love.*

One interesting side note is that although students were able to make the compare and contrast relationships, they weren't always convinced that the clauses belonged in the same sentence. Several students wrote sentences that looked like this:

> *Although their [sic] was already a relationship of father & son — because he was raised in the same house with his father,*
>
> *On the other hand in "Basketball" little J. D. was not raised with his father. But was beginning working on father and son relationship.*

All readers need to put their thoughts into a form in order to share them with others; we need forms in order to express our thoughts publicly, or, as Coles' students put it, to speak and write "like [we] care whether someone understands [us] or not" (308). Experienced readers have internalized the forms in which we conventionally express our questions and ideas about what we have read. Less experienced readers need to be shown forms for formulating questions and for expressing tentative answers. Creative writers have long recognized the value of putting ideas into forms. Critical writers also need forms in which to express their thoughts. While not of the same kind as those for creative writing, these forms have the same function: they provide limits in which we can contain our ideas. The five-paragraph essay is

a kind of form, but it does not address the many steps which students must take to move from their ideas (hopefully generated by reading) to an essay. To take those steps, students need tighter and shorter forms of written language as well as class discussion which enables them "to communicate and thus to reflect upon [their] thoughts, and to re-articulate and extend them in the context of second thoughts and other people's thoughts" (Moreland 137). If we want our students to generate and express ideas, we need to recognize the value of teaching form.

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TRANSFORMING THROUGH LEARNING

Christina Valenti

Jayne MacPherson

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In Dominic's Case

Christina Valenti

Editors' Note:

This volume of commentaries on teaching and learning at Bunker Hill Community College would be sorely lacking if it did not include the unique perspective of students who both learn and teach. The tutoring experience can, and often does, have the effect of changing the lives of both tutor and learner in significant ways. As this collection of articles began to take shape, we asked Professor Jennifer Rosser, who has taught the Writing Tutors' Seminar for over a decade, to select a case study that reflects the heart and soul of the tutoring experience. From the bundle of extraordinary pieces that she showed us, this is the one we chose.

During the fall semester of 1999, as part of the Writing Tutors' Seminar, I was assigned to tutor Dominic (not his real name), a young man in his early twenties or late teens who had come to the United States with his family from Trinidad. He had signed up in the Multi-Assistance Center for help in completing his in-progress grade for College Writing I, a course in which students learn to write college level essays. Tutoring Dominic and other students that semester was my first tutoring experience.

The morning I met Dominic, his scheduled tutor was already late and he looked distinctly bored. When Lori Pennel, the MAC Coordinator, asked me to work with him, I cheerfully approached him and introduced myself, but Dominic did not even acknowledge me. Instead, he kept on staring into space. Trying not to be discouraged, I got his folder and sat down. When at last he did look at me, it was only a brief glance. When I asked him for a writing sample, he wrote three or four sentences and, without a word, passed the paper back to me. I tried to talk to him, but it was no use; he was not interested.

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Finally, Dominic told me that he was an electronics major and that he didn't like writing. He seemed to believe he would never need writing skills. His tone told me that he came for tutoring only because he had to. I only smiled harder and tried not to show how I truly felt about his attitude. Luckily, he had his folder open and inside I noticed a car magazine. Recognizing this as an opportunity, I asked him about it. Like most people, Dominic is his own favorite topic and was willing to talk about his interest in repairing cars. As he talked, I encouraged him to write down his ideas. These words were later turned into sentences, and then into a paragraph.

It soon became clear that Dominic had a difficult time writing if left undirected, probably due to attention issues. He was much more productive if given clear verbal cues and prompts every step of the way. Over the weeks, we worked on a sentence-combining workbook and the writing process. Writing anxiety seemed to be a constant battle for Dominic. The first facial expression I ever saw clearly on his face was that of fear. When I had asked him to write a paragraph (five sentences), a look of extreme apprehension flashed across his face. It was the first time I really understood that his indifference was a mask.

Over the next few weeks, the importance of body language became apparent to me. As much as he leaned back, I leaned forward. If he looked indifferent, I smiled. Often, I could sense what kind of session we would have by the way he was sitting in his chair. If he was alert and looking for me, I knew we would have a productive session. If he looked disgusted, I knew that we were off to a bad start before we had even begun. I could tell how he felt about his writing by the way he was sitting in his chair. There would be times he would lean back in his chair and only write when prompted. This was a slow, painful, choppy task, but if he became interested in what he was writing, he would lean forward and concentrate. His concentration improved as the weeks wore on.

Of all the steps in the writing process, pre-writing required the most work on my part because I had to continually nudge him toward expanding his thoughts. *Then what happened? How did it look, taste feel, or smell?* When a thought was exhausted, we would move on to the next one. His favorite prewriting technique was making a list, but when he wrote the paragraph unaided, it read just like his notes. I asked him to take it a step further by rewriting it while I asked him questions and encouraged him to think about how the ideas were related to each other. Using this technique improved Dominic's writing drastically.

During some sessions, Dominic would write something, then stop and stare into space without responding. This lessened as the weeks passed, perhaps because he realized that my whole purpose was to help him improve. There would be times he would surprise me — for example, when I thought he was not listening, I would give him a piece of advice or express a thought. On these occasions, Dominic would not show any recognition of me verbally, but he would respond in his writing. During some sessions, his short attention span was particularly evident. We would be working on a paper and, after forty-five minutes or so, he would just refuse to write another word despite any amount of encouragement. We worked around this by varying work on writing with workbook assignments.

Gradually, I saw Dominic's view of me gradually change from regarding me as an enemy to acknowledging me as an ally. He realized that I was on his side and that I could be trusted. His prewriting notes grew from words to phrases, and his attention span lengthened. The work he completed in the workbook was evidently helpful because his sentences became longer and smoother. At one point in the semester, Dominic skipped his tutoring sessions for two consecutive weeks. When he returned and asked if we could resume, I knew he had grown personally. I think the reason he skipped was because he had not completed a homework assignment and was afraid to return with it undone. When Dominic returned and asked for help, he was smiling, talking and ready to work. He surprised me. By the end of the semester, his attention span had lengthened again. He would stop writing, think for a minute, and then resume.

Next semester, Dominic needs to continue working on different types of writing. My advice to his next tutor is to be patient with him and realize that the image he portrays of the indifferent student is just that — an image. It is not an accurate portrayal of his true feelings, but rather a defense for the insecurities and fears he has about his ability to write. He will write best about what interests him currently — soccer and cars. Give him simple choices about what to write. For example, if the topic is "neighborhoods," ask him if he wants to write about his neighborhood or neighborhoods in general. If he decides not to choose, decide for him. It is also important to be aware of his attention span; he will not work if he is worn out, but sometimes shifting the focus works well to regain his interest.

Of course, the observations I have noted are not a diagnosis. They are simply observations made during my first semester of tutoring. In that time, I

came to understand my role as something like that of a physical therapist. Writing skills are like a muscle, and like any muscle, writing skills need exercise in order to become stronger. Without use, they only grow weaker. Dominic came to me with a weak muscle, one that hurt when he used it, and so he began to fear not only using it but also appearing weak. It was my responsibility to help him understand the need for strengthening it and to give him exercises for that purpose. In the process, I learned very clearly that he had to exercise it on his own. My role was largely that of suggesting ideas to guide him. Without necessarily being a friend, I needed to sympathize with his pain. The role was not always easy, but in the end it was very rewarding.

It has been a year since my experience with Dominic. Since that first semester, I have continued tutoring English and have worked part-time for the Multi-Assistance Center. My experience with Dominic taught me more about being a tutor than any seminar possibly could, and for that I am grateful. I can still remember the first time I saw that fear flash across his face. I was instantly glad I had chosen to be patient instead of showing my exasperation at his apparent indifference. Over this past year, I have also gained a sense of appreciation for the gift I have as a native English speaker and am considering continuing my education in the direction of English as a second language teaching so that I can help others like Dominic. Until then, tutoring will continue to be a meaningful part of my experience as a student at Bunker Hill Community College.

Communicating Across Cultures in the Operating Room

Jayne MacPherson

The operating room is a diverse and dynamic environment with its own language and culture. Although operating rooms in modern medical facilities around the world share common physical features, they are not all the same. What you learn in one may vary from what you learn in another. For the most part, surgeries are the same, but the surgeons are different. To work in the operating room successfully, each member of the team has to know its language and culture. Surgical technology students entering the operating room environment for the first time must not only learn the technical terminology associated with surgical procedures, but also the unique culture and customs of the group.

As an example, learning the value of silence is difficult for some students. In the operating room, silence is expected when a patient is going to sleep. Our culture teaches us to speak up, to be gregarious. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, but, in the operating room, silence is the norm. During the surgical procedure, both verbal and nonverbal communication may be used by many of the surgeons to ask for instruments. The rules of speaking during the surgical procedure are very clear — you do not argue with the surgeons, whether they are right or wrong, and you speak only when necessary to communicate a need. In this environment, it is frowned upon to be louder than the norm, or to be recognized as a student. The best student is the one who can blend into the scenery.

As an instructor, I try to prepare students for the culture shock that comes with their first clinical experience. Culture shock is an experience that occurs when many familiar cultural cues and patterns are severed, when living or working in an ambiguous environment for an extended period of time, when our values and beliefs are questioned in a new environment and when we are continually expected to perform with appropriate skills and

speed before we fully understand clearly the rules of performance (Chen 164). Thorough preparation in the language and culture of the operating room prior to the actual experience helps ease culture shock by teaching students what to expect and what is expected of them.

In addition to oral communication, our students must learn the specific nonverbal signals used during a surgical procedure. Generally, the gesture used by a surgeon to request a clamp is a hand extended out flat with fingers opened. For scissors, the hand is extended with two fingers moving to simulate a cutting motion. For a ligature to tie off a bleeding vessel, the surgeon will hold a hand out, palm down.

The language of the operating room is often complicated by the use of multiple names for similar items. Sponges, for example, may be called *4 by 4's*, *4 by 8's*, or *ray-tecs*. Larger sponges are called *hanks*, *lap pads*, *hankies*, *M's*, or *mic pads*. Small round sponges are called *peanuts*, *pushers*, *dissectors*, or *kitners*. One day, a surgeon coming to our hospital for the first time asked for a ray-tec during the procedure. I had never heard this name before, so I asked him to repeat it; this time when he said "ray-tec," he added "sponge," so I knew what he wanted.

In addition to the complications of learning new non-verbal signals and multiple terms for instruments, the culture of the operating room may present challenges based on more general social and cultural factors. Blending operating room language and culture with gender differences and diverse cultural backgrounds can lead to miscommunication for both the learner and the clinical instructor.

For many years, it was my job to train new surgical technologists in the operating room. One of the people I taught was from a large Portuguese family in Rhode Island. "Ed" (not his real name) came with excellent references, had an associate's degree in surgical technology, and had graduated at the top of his class. When I first started teaching Ed the language and customs of our operating room, he seemed to have trouble comprehending what I was saying. The surgeon would hold out his hand, palm down, for a ligature. When I told Ed what the surgeon wanted, Ed would look at me blankly and ignore what I was saying. At the end of the procedure, I asked Ed why he would not listen to what I was telling him, to which he would reply, "That's not the way they did it in Rhode Island." Every time I tried to tell Ed what a word or signal meant, it was as though I was speaking a foreign language. Not only did Ed not understand what I was

saying, he was angry at me for saying it. I could not understand the anger and Ed did not volunteer any information. The only thing he would reveal was that he did not like being corrected in front of the surgeons.

In teaching Ed the hand signals and gestures of the operating room, I was giving him the tools he needed to work successfully in the surgical field. In the operating room, as well as in most work situations, you have to know what a look or gesture means. Ed's inability to adapt to our local operating room customs seemed to be more than just a question of his wanting to do things his own way. He seemed unable to take direction or stop himself from getting angry when showed the correct way to do things in our context.

As Ed began to lose confidence in his ability to function in the operating room, I began to lose confidence in my ability to teach him. Ed struggled daily with even the most routine tasks. I tried using language differently. I would use more hand gestures to communicate with Ed so that he would not be embarrassed by my corrections. He and I spent hours going over what was expected of him in the operating room. I explained our rules and how the most important ones were non-negotiable. Our inability to solve the communication problem was especially frustrating in light of the fact that our operating staff had an excellent track record in orienting new technicians to the operating room.

Through these follow-up sessions, it became clear that part of the problem was gender and part was culture. Researchers have consistently found that males and females differ significantly in terms of assumptions about communication and the use of communication rules (Chen 298). I thought I was teaching, and Ed thought I was telling him what to do. Ed came from a home culture where men were dominant and entered a work culture where women are in the majority. As a general rule, women run the operating room except for the surgeons, who are predominately male.

The connection between language and culture, essential to effective communication, happens when one both understands the culture and speaks the language. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis explains that language differences are not just vocabulary and grammar; the differences in perception shaped by communicating in a new language force you to live in a different world (Agar 63-72). Misunderstandings can occur when a non-native speaker has facility in the language but does not understand the culture. Language creates culture, and culture creates language. Therefore, we can acquire a new language; however, if we do not appreciate the fact that the reality of the new

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cultural context is different from ours, we cannot live in that world as insiders. This holds true for verbal and nonverbal communication.

In the situation with Ed, the language-culture connection was lacking. Ed understood some of the language of the operating room, but he did not understand the culture. The misunderstandings between us happened because Ed was unwilling to adapt to our norms or learn our rituals. Although some of what we do could be left to interpretation, most of our rules are in place for the purpose of improving communication between surgeons and staff. Ed's experience at Rhode Island Hospital as a student taught him the tools of surgical technology but not how to adapt to the culture of the operating room. He needed to understand the terms, but he also needed to know when to speak, what to say, and how to say it. He also needed to understand that I could teach him these things by helping him achieve the language-culture connection. He needed to learn that women talk in order to build a rapport with others and that by talking to him during the surgical procedures, I was passing on the personal lessons that would help him work in the operating room.

Our miscommunication also had to do with both of us wanting to present a positive face. "Face" refers to the projected image of a person's self in a relationship network. It represents an individual's social position and the prestige that comes from the successful performance of one or more specific social roles that are well recognized by other members in the society. In other words, "face" is the image a person wants to show to the world they are living in. Positive face is our desire to be appreciated and approved of. Negative face is our desire to be autonomous (Chen 152). My positive face was also threatened by Ed's anger. I have worked in the operating room for a very long time and have built up a good relationship with the surgeons. By arguing with me openly, Ed was threatening my positive face. By correcting him in front of the surgeons and the other operating room staff whose approval he sought, I was threatening his. At times, Ed probably wanted to show a negative face in his desire to remain autonomous. Along with his anger, Ed constantly made excuses, uttering such phrases as "you never told me that," or "that's not the way they did it in Rhode Island." In these instances, Ed was trying to save face or lessen the impact of the face-threatening act. If I had understood the concepts of the language-culture connection and "face" at the time I was working with Ed, I would have been able to deal with the situation better. I would not have been so angry at Ed or myself for what was a definite lack of communication.

It was also clear that gender played a huge role in our relationship. Ed did not like being told what to do by a woman. It threatened his power and status as a man. In retrospect, I believe that the differences could have been overcome if we had understood what the differences were. Ed came from a culture where men were considered the leaders and the teachers. His cultural background became more evident as I began to know Ed better. During conversations at lunch and break, Ed talked about his family and some of their traditions. He was planning his wedding, and it became clear that most of the women did the cooking, cleaning and taking care of the children while the men worked and supported their families. According to Chen, differences in the ways men and women are socialized into their cultural environment lead to different perspectives on how, when, and why people communicate with each other (299).

Finally, culture shock and cultural adaptation theory also played a role in Ed's orientation process. At first, Ed was happy to have a job as a surgical technician. He was confident and sure that he would adapt to the environment. This was the honeymoon period, characterized by fascination with the new culture and excitement about the new things encountered in the host culture. Then came the crisis stage, characterized by frequent confusion and disintegration as we confront differences in values, beliefs and lifestyles. Ed started losing his confidence and was blaming others for his lack of understanding. Eventually, Ed began to adjust to the cultural norms of the operating room. The adjustment stage is characterized by an appreciation and respect for the new culture. As Ed began to adapt to his new environment, he began to understand the unique features of our operating room. Although Ed left before completely adapting to our culture, it was not far from being accomplished, and his experience with us probably made it easier for him to adapt to his new job in another operating room.

Some of the differences Ed and I experienced could have been overcome if we had understood where the conflict was coming from. We needed to recognize our differences and try to work together to overcome the communication problem. Many of these situations are the same for our community college students. Like anyone entering a new work situation, students need to learn how to communicate in this strange place, with its own culture, customs, and language. The operating room is a place where what we think we know is different from what we need to know to be successful. Differences in the way we learn in the different environments

teach us how to adapt to new situations, and observing our students' ways of knowing, in turn, teaches us to better structure and facilitate their learning experience.

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Looking into the Mirror

Ruth Kirschner

As a middle-aged, sixth-semester, full-time student at Bunker Hill Community College, I owe a lot to the faculty. Having become increasingly involved in student and academic affairs over the past two years, I am more appreciative and aware of what quality education is. I have also become more convinced of the advantages of postponing serious higher education until a more mature age.

In my case, I attempted college courses immediately following graduation from high school. My formal education as a child, and more especially during my adolescent years, had been stormy and unproductive. Strangely enough, I only really succeeded as a 20-year-old college student when I took two postgraduate courses in special education. I did well in these two courses because I was highly motivated to learn the course material and because the professor was very supportive. That was over twenty-five years ago. By living, working and studying abroad, I matured and became independent and motivated enough to strive to reach my childhood goal of becoming a nurse.

When I first enrolled at BHCC in the summer of 1995, I took only the two classes in which I was interested. By the time I had accumulated 12 credits, I decided to apply for admission as a full-time student. I knew I was interested in nursing and psychology, but because I was not ready to take the entrance exam for the nursing program, I was matriculated as a general concentration major. However, I decided to ignore this label and take courses I would need for nursing and psychology, accumulating over 100 credits. With the exception of two courses, I have really enjoyed my educational experience at BHCC. I have always had a good relationship with the faculty but have benefited from three or four of them in particular. I value their knowledge and innovative methods of presenting information, bringing a sense of humor to class discussion, and motivating students to develop in creative and beneficial ways.

I have found it particularly helpful for professors to suggest ways of studying, thus giving students more confidence in their ability to become successful in their studies. Having students give group or individual presentations also encourages the development of self-learning through "teaching" fellow students. I have learned to seek out professors who clearly enjoy teaching, encourage critical thinking, and show enthusiasm during lectures. This type of instruction and behavior motivates and inspires students who really want to learn.

In one course, the professor offered two honors option projects. When I told her that I wanted to do one of the options because I felt it would "complete" the course material, she suggested I enroll in the honors program. I was a little apprehensive at first because I would have to take an honors seminar course and complete honors options for at least three other courses. At the same time, I really did not have to be persuaded and felt I had nothing to lose, except to delay my graduation until June 2000, rather than graduate in June 1999.

This same professor uses a teaching method in which students learn by giving individual presentations within a group. I am very much in favor of encouraging students, under the guidance of the professor, to "teach" the other members of the class by preparing specific topics that relate to the course objectives and content. Through group activities such as this, we as individuals learn the course material more thoroughly. The first time I did such a presentation, I was nervous and disorganized. The second time, the groups were given more time to complete their presentations, which turned out to be a big help. I had also learned from my mistake of not being organized well enough and having little idea of how long I would need for my presentation. As a result, I was more organized the second time and did much better. In fact, one student in the class even asked me if I was a teacher!

Another aspect of education that I feel is important to my learning is the development of critical thinking skills. Critical thinking and language skills are vital in society today. Without them, development is impossible, never mind quality education. We must all learn to question what is happening around us and to think for ourselves if we want to survive, reach our potential, and effectively help others do the same. I value professors who use and encourage critical thinking during their lectures. The difficulty is that

many, if not most, students do not know how to develop such skills on their own; they need clear, definite guidance. I find it helpful when professors ask specific questions that make students think about the answer in terms of being able to realize all possibilities and choose the most appropriate one, depending on how one interprets the situation and what one hopes to achieve from the answer.

Critical thinking is particularly vital in the nursing profession when life-saving decisions must be made immediately in crisis situations. However, the development of these skills is not limited to any one course or field of study. What is learned in one sometimes crosses over to another in unexpectedly beneficial ways. For example, it was only during my last semester at BHCC, when I was trying to complete my statistics course in time to graduate, that I really began to understand why mathematics is so valuable in developing both reasoning and critical thinking skills. Mathematics involves number sequence, without which certain problems cannot be solved. Reasoning and critical thinking often involve similar types of sequential thinking or analysis. Although mathematics greatly contributes to the development of critical thinking skills, there are other means of acquiring such skills, such as learning how to ask appropriate questions. Therefore, it is important that critical thinking skills be taught and practiced in all courses.

In addition to the knowledge and skills I have gained in the classroom, I have also had the opportunity to develop my interpersonal and leadership skills through participation in extra-curricular activities. In a discussion with my biology professor four summers ago, she encouraged me to reach for a higher goal than the one I had set for myself. She saw me as a nurse manager or supervisor! Although I felt confident that I would make an excellent nurse supervisor one day, I knew I had personality issues to resolve and needed some leadership training and experience. Due to my increased learning awareness and growing confidence, I decided to remain at BHCC as a full-time student, continuing as an officer in the Student Government Association, student representative on college committees, and as a writer for the student newspaper. These activities have given me the leadership training I need to achieve a higher level of education and to fulfill my potential as a nursing professional.

Contributors

Megon Barrow is the first person in her family to obtain a college education. Having already received her A.A. in Psychology earlier this year, she is currently pursuing an additional degree in Computer Science. She plans to attend Emmanuel College for her B.A. in Child Psychology and then go on to master's and doctoral studies. Her future goals include developing a private practice and becoming a published author.

Carole Center, an adjunct English instructor at BHCC, also teaches at Umass Boston and Northeastern University, where she coordinates the Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute for English teachers. She earned an M.A. in English and is finishing up her M.A. in Writing. Before she began teaching, she had a career as an administrator in residential treatment centers for emotionally disturbed children.

Claire I. Donahue is Assistant Professor in Nurse Education at BHCC and a clinical nurse specialist in psychiatric-mental health nursing. She received her M.S. in nursing from Boston College. Throughout the years, Claire has taught nursing at various levels. Currently, she has a private practice as a psychotherapist in Acton, Massachusetts.

Kevin Finnigan is currently a professor in the English Department. Prior to his arrival at BHCC, he taught language skills and ran educational programs in a variety of settings, including a rural high school, an adult diploma program, and in a county jail. He has taught ESL to rich kids at a posh prep school and to the Air Force wives on Pease Air Force Base. This long list is either a testament to his wide knowledge of the issues involved in literacy instruction or proof he can't hold a job.

Rita Frey is a Professor in the Allied Health Certificate Programs, which she helped design in 1986. She has developed and taught both lecture and laboratory courses for this successful program, in which an internship experience plays an integral role. She co-authored a textbook for nursing assistants and has continued to work as an emergency department nurse and currently as a nurse in urgent care. As part of a recent grant project, she is affiliated with Brigham and Women's Hospital to develop a career ladder for patient care assistants.

Adele A. Hamblett received her B.S. from the State University of New York and her M.Ed. from Northeastern University. She has taught mathematics at BHCC since 1977, and has not yet grown tired of the classroom. For Professor Hamblett, there is an excitement that arises from teaching each class because of the newness of the experience for every group of learners.

Lloyd Sheldon Johnson is an actor, writer, professor, healer and artist. Educated at Wayne State, Harvard, Antioch and Emerson, he studied art in Europe and New York. As a television actor, his credits include "A Likely Story" (WCVB) and "Africans in America" (WGBH). At BHCC, he teaches oral communication and African literature as well as a behavioral science course, The Sociology of Hate. In his life and career, Professor Johnson's commitment to human rights and inclusion is boundless.

Ruth Kirschner has been a student of formal education periodically throughout her adult life. She lived and studied in England for over fifteen years, where she received a diploma in the Montessori Method of Education and a certificate of National Academic Awards in Social Studies. She has finished the requirements for her A.A. at BHCC and has been accepted as a sophomore at the Boston College School of Nursing.

Sharyn Lowenstein has been an adult educator and teacher of undergraduate and graduate students in community colleges as well as four-year public and private institutions. She has taught study skills, writing, reading, education, and communication courses. With Peaco Todd, she co-authored *Frame by Frame: A Visual Guide to College Success* (Prentice Hall, 1999).

Mong Ngoc Manh was born in a small village in southern Vietnam. Because she suffered from ill health as a child, she missed out on several years of education in her country. Mong came to this country with her family in 1992 and entered the Allied Health Certificate Programs in 1999 to study to become a patient care assistant. She chose this career because she wishes to pay back her caregivers, her parents and aunt, who took care of her when she was in need.

Jayne MacPherson is an instructor in the Surgical Technology Program at BHCC. She has been a surgical technologist for 31 years and has precepted surgical technologists in the operating room for 20 years. She earned her B.S. degree in Human Services at Lesley College in 1999 and is currently working on an M.S. in Healthcare Administration at Framingham State College.

Irene A. Sancinito is an associate professor in the Mathematics Department and is proud to be a product of the Massachusetts state college system. She holds a master's degree from Bridgewater State College, and has taught at BHCC for 13 years. Professor Sancinito enjoys the challenge of getting developmental level students to overcome their fears and to actually enjoy doing math.

Michelle Schweitzer has been teaching at BHCC for the past 18 years. She has a B.S. in Education and an M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language. The project she describes in her article supports her belief that cultural diversity makes this country rich and that sharing that diversity benefits everyone.

Diane M. Smith, Public Service Librarian, initiated and continues to develop a library workshop program combining information literacy objectives and Web-based educational methods. She serves as webmaster for the BHCC Library Web page and also teaches part-time in the BHCC English department. Previous to working in education, Smith had a successful career in sales and marketing management.

Vilma M. Tafawa has had an exciting and challenging career in teaching and education administration in Guyana, England, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea and the United States over a period of thirty years. She is an adjunct instructor and the acting director of Community Education at BHCC. Vilma, who has an M.Ed. in English, derives enormous satisfaction from being active in the community.

Lorraine Trethewey has been Project Director of the BHCC Service Learning Program since its inception in the fall of 1997. As a professor in the Hospitality Department, she integrates a variety of service learning projects into her Meeting and Special Events Planning course. Lorraine strongly encourages all faculty to enjoy the added dimensions of teaching and learning that this pedagogy brings to both students and teachers.

Anne R. Umansky, Professor in the English Department, is a native of New York City who made the easy switch from her Greenwich Village "flat" to Cambridge in 1971. She received her B.A. and M.A. from the City University of New York where she later taught at Hunter College and John Jay College of Criminal Justice. When BHCC opened in 1973, she became a charter member. She is dedicated to turning students on to the one pleasure that is guaranteed and enduring – reading.

Christina Valenti is a general concentration major currently in her last semester at BHCC. She has been a tutor in the Multi-Assistance Center, a peer advisor, and an active participant in campus life. She plans to teach English to children overseas, and will walk away from the college with memories of the cultural diversity, the "things you can't learn from a textbook," and with an appreciation of the sincere dedication of all of her professors.

Paula Velluto, professor in the Computer and Electronics Technology Department, has over twenty-five years of education and industry experience. Together with Joanne Manville, Paula designed and led an Elder Hostel Program entitled "Computers for the Terminally Terrified." She has represented BHCC at several technology conferences, and collaborated with Michelle Schweitzer to design and pilot the first ESL/Computers integrated course at the college.

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